


STRAIGHT PATHS FOR YOUR FEET (1885)



MARCUS RAINSFORD

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“STRAIGHT PATHS FOR
YOUR FEET.”

BY THE REV.

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London :

HODDER AND STOUGHTON,

27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCLXXXV.

"STRAIGHT PATHS FOR
YOUR FEET"

AT THE NEW

MARCO'S RAINBOWS, ETC.

DEPARTMENT OF LITERATURE AND ART

THE NEW

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PREFACE.

The following notes from Lectures of mine on some of the most important words in the Bible, (which, although in common use, are nevertheless least understood by the majority of hearers,) have been taken down by a skilful hand. I have revised them as best I could; and they are now sent forth with prayer, and in hope they may be helpful to seeking souls in enabling them "to know the certainty of the words of truth, and that they may answer the words of truth" to them that may enquire of them.

MARCUS RAINSFORD.

BELGRAVE CHAPEL,

CHRISTMAS 1881.

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SIN.

GEN. III.—Sin originated in the tempter and in our disobedience to the revealed will of God. And as Rom. v. 12 shows us we stand before God ruined by reason of our natural connection with the first Adam, so also in that same chapter the fact is revealed of a marvellous parallel, a *second Adam*, and that we stand before God simply on the ground of what *He is*. We are lost on the ground of our connection with the first Adam; and we stand before God in Christ simply on the ground of His merits and finished work, which—gloriously complete—unites us to Him. And this Christ—the free gift of God—is to be had only for the taking. No qualification is necessary, except the qualification of our *ruin*.

In Gen. iii., we are taught the *author* of sin is Satan. The *occasion* of sin was our disobedience to God and our obedience to the devil. The *materials* used were pride, distrust, unbelief. And thus tempting her to disobedience, Satan presented to the eye of Eve that which answers to the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, and told her that she would be like God if she disobeyed Him. And she fell into the sin, and Adam's love for her made him follow her example.

What is sin? It is *contrariety to God*. The law

brings out the extent of that contrariety. If God is everything that is desirable, then contrariety to God must be everything that is undesirable. If God is everything that is good, then contrariety must be everything that is evil. If God is the source of joy, life, happiness, peace, and glory, then contrariety must be the very opposite to these.

The question is often asked, Why has God permitted sin? Indirectly, the permission of sin is the greatest manifestation of the love of God. God's word says, "God is love." We all know what it is, in some measure, to love and to be loved; and we know how love yearns to be loved. And God yearns for that reciprocity of love to Him which can only be given by those who have a will of their own. The very nature of love is that it is the voluntary outcome of the heart. And the joy of God is to have beings to love Him. But if God makes creatures to have a will of their own, they are liable to exercise that will in the wrong way. Yet, in the full view of what Calvary would cost Him to bring them back, God made man, and thus the permission of sin is one of the grandest indirect proofs of the wondrous love of God to man. And the world is the scene where this great love is brought out.

Oh! the fulness that is in Christ, to meet the emptiness that is in us!

The entrance of sin into the world? What a little sin it seemed to be! one simple act of distrust in God. God told them in the day they ate of that fruit they should die. The devil told them *no*. And they distrusted God, and that little germ of *distrust* contained

all the curse and ruin and misery and sorrow that has filled our world ever since. The acorn is a seed little in itself, yet in it slumbers the germ of the mighty oak. So in this seemingly little sin slumbered the germ that crucified Christ. Evil dropped into the mind brings ruin, death. Sin is a fearful thing. Look at its results—*alienation from God*. Adam hides himself, goes away from God, tries to cover his abomination, the nakedness that sin had exposed, and blames everything and everybody but self. It is the same still. Sinners blame their ignorance, their weakness, their circumstances, their temptations, the tendency of their own heart, the devil, and even God Himself. "The woman *Thou* gavest me," she tempted me.

Observe the description given of sin in the word of God. It is compared to a *loathsome* disease, that pervades not only the body, but the understanding, the affections, the will, and makes the whole man perfectly impotent to do good. It is compared to *leprosy*, the most odious disease that ever was, which separated the possessor from all society, from God's people, and God's house. In life all our sorrows and tears flow from this terrible disease; and when life here is over, you are not done with it, you go out of the world to the judgment-seat of God, to be judged for your sins.

Psa. li. 5.—We talk of innocent infants, but the germ of sin is there, and the principle soon develops itself.

There is a vast variety in what the world estimates as sin. There is the sinfulness of an elegant, cultivated person, full of attractive manners, and the sinfulness

of the gross sensualist ; but there is no real difference in God's sight. The sin in both is contrariety to God. (Isa. liii. 6.) "All gone astray," gone away from God, from our resting-place. My way of going away from God may be very different from yours, yet both are wandering from Him, and "our own way" is to get away from the love, rest, joy, and peace that He is yearning to give us.

Gen. vi. 5.—How soon the world became an insufferable dwelling-place. God was in every way disappointed with man, whom He had made in His own image ; and He sent a flood and swept them all away, because "the imagination of man's heart was only evil continually"—contrariety to God. No recognition, no communion, no union with God.

Then look further on to Jer. xvii. 9—a long stretch of time, yet things have not changed : "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,"—no cure for it, hopeless. There is evil, then, in your hearts, that even the devil himself cannot be guilty of. He never crucified the Son of God afresh, nor rejected the grace that we dare to trifle with. What lies at the root of our bad tempers but the desperately bad state of our hearts? "*I the Lord search the heart.*" In the mercy of Almighty God, He has reserved for His own special search the iniquity of the human heart. If man saw himself, his own heart as it is, he could not continue in his reason, the sight would be so fearful ; therefore, "*I the Lord search the heart.*"

In Matt. xv. 19, Christ, who searcheth the heart, gives you His estimation of it : "*Out of the heart*

proceeds," &c. He lays hold there upon those aspects of sin that *we* recognize. He does not there mention the root sin, because none but those who are taught of God can recognize the root sin, and that is *alienation from God*. The breaking of one commandment involves all the rest.

In Matt. xxv., where we have the Great Judge, sitting on the judgment-seat, we do not hear Him say, You were a liar, a thief, a murderer, but, "*I was hungry, and ye gave Me no meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink,*" &c. It is *contrariety to Him*.

Want of communion with Him, want of love to Him, want of a holy, loving trust in God ; that lies at the root of all the abominations into which we fall.

In Rom. iii. 10-18, we have another portrait of the natural man, even in us who have received Christ. Our old man is not in union with Christ, but remains as crucified to be battled with, and lived down: "The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." The grand exercise for learning to lean on the strength of God is the daily moaning over the weakness of self. "None righteous, no, not one : none that understandeth, that seeketh after God." "All gone out of the way." It is *absence from God* is their ruin.

Then, the worst phase of sin is described in Ps. li. 4 : "*Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned.*"

But if we want to see what sin is, look at the cross of Christ. There we have God's estimate of sin. Think of *who* Christ was, and of *what* He suffered, and that simply and solely because He was bearing our sin. "God made Him to be sin for us." Oh!

brethren, in the wild cry from the Son of God, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" in the fearful sacrifice of the life of the only begotten Son of God poured out, we may judge what sin is in the sight of God. The sin of sins is this—*rejecting Christ*. All are apt and ready to recognize a murderer to be a sinner; but what about the men who do not *trust in Christ*? They are *the* sinners; but it requires the Holy Ghost to convince them of this. (John xvi. 7-9.)

Well, Christ has "put away sin." "He has made an end of sin." "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." "He has blotted out as a thick cloud our sins." And my belief in that gives me union with the second Adam.

DEATH.

ROM. v. 12.—“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into this world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

“The wages of sin is death.” Death was the penalty for sin: “The soul that sinneth it shall die.” This death is not the separation of soul and body, but the separation of the spirit from the soul; and body and soul *separated from God* is the death which is the penalty of sin. Natural men are entombed souls in living bodies. It is an awful thought, and yet it is the case with every man who is separated from Christ.

In Eph. ii. 2, we have the thought of an entombed soul in a living body, “*dead* in trespasses and sins, wherein in times past ye *walked*,” &c. A creature, dead, awfully dead, spiritually dead, yet walking about.

This death is also described, in Eph. iv. 18, as *alienation from God*. And, in Rom. viii. 6, as *minding the things of the flesh*.

And notice, in these descriptions of death, we are not called to meditate on the grosser sins, as murder, adultery, &c., but on sin as regards *our aspect towards God*.

In Phil. iii. 4, we find the Apostle speaking of a *religious* flesh. His religious privileges, which he calls

the flesh, were the ground of his confidence at the time he speaks of. Minding the things of the flesh indicates spiritual death.

In Eph. iv. 18, we have this spiritual death described by *ignorance of God*: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." There is no life if there is no knowledge of God. Sin severs the soul from the life of God.

Another description of this spiritual death we have in 1 Tim. v. 6: "She that *liveth in pleasure* is dead while she liveth."

From John v. 24, we gather that *unbelief of God* and want of *trust in Christ* illustrate and manifest the presence of this spiritual death: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

In John iii. 35, we are taught that "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that *believeth not the Son shall not see life*; but the wrath of God abideth on him." It does not mean *natural* life, but spiritual. So, spiritual death is *separation from God, ignorance of God, minding other things, unbelief of God*; these all imply the infliction of that second death of which we read in Rev. xx. 14.

Natural death is not the wages of sin; for after Adam sinned he lived over nine hundred years. And yet God had said to him, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt *surely* die" (or "dying, thou shalt

die," is the force of the word "surely" in the original). The penalty of sin was *immediately* inflicted. But natural death is intended by God to be an illustration of spiritual death. What a fearful mysteriousness there is about death ! What fearful suffering ! It is sin that gives to death its fearful significance.

We have in the New Testament three aspects of death :—

1. The little maid, just dead. And the Lord took her by the hand and said, "Damsel, I say unto thee, arise." And she arose.

2. The youth, "the only-son of his mother." He had been dead longer than the little maid, and was therefore in a further state of corruption ; but both were alike dead.

3. Lazarus, who had been dead four days. Past the state of the little maid and the youth—a stage of corruption further on ; but all alike dead.

And so, in the matter of spiritual death, there are various stages ; yet all are equally separation from God. The death of some appears in vicious, open sins ; in others, it is hidden under the elegancies of life. We have a description of this in Ezek. xxxvii. : the dry bones were very dry ; then came flesh upon them ; they looked well, but no life till the *Spirit of God* breathed upon them. They show us how far we may go without life. Look at a dead tree. The sun and rain and warmth, which if there were life in it would cause it to flourish, only hasten its decomposition when it is dead. Till the Holy Ghost comes into the soul there is no life ; and He does it by teaching the word of God and imparting divine truth.

Dead in sins is followed by "dying in your sins" (John viii. 24), and that is followed by the second death, "when death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. xx. 14.) Let us look at a few descriptions that are given us of *eternal death*, in the Scriptures. It is described, in Rom. ii. 8-9, as *God's* "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish." Is that nothing?

2 Thess. i. 9, as *banishment from God*: "Depart from Me, ye cursed," &c.

Spoken of, in Matt. xxv. 41, as *society with the devil for ever*: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

In Rev. xx., as *the lake of fire*.

As the *outer darkness*, "where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The *blackness of darkness* for ever, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

The *mists of darkness*. (2 Pet. ii. 17.)

The *wrath to come*, and "the *wrath of the Lamb*." Oh, think of what it is!

But for all who trust Christ, lean on Christ, receive Christ, "He has *abolished death*, and brought life and immortality to light;" and neither death nor life shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. We who believe have already died to sin in Christ, been crucified with Christ, paid the penalty of sin in Christ. And so death natural is but the *second step* into glory, the *first step* having taken place when Christ brought us out of darkness into His marvellous light; and the *third step* will be when body and soul are united together again, to be with Him for ever.

LIFE.

ST. JOHN VI. 52-57.—To-day we will consider *Life*, what it is as set forth in Holy Scripture. Death is not spoken of in Scripture merely as cessation of being ; and so life is not spoken of as the mere continuation of existence.

We read, in John iii. 36, "He that believeth on the Son hath *everlasting life*." See that *life*, it is not natural life, for it is spoken to *living men* ; and to them He says, "Unless ye believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, ye shall not *see life*." So it is entirely beyond and distinct from that thing that we understand by existence.

Again, in 1 John v. 12, we read, "He that hath the Son hath life." Life has its source in the Son of God, and so "he that hath the Son hath *the* life." (The article has been left out in our translation, but it ought to be there—"the life.") And so here (in verse 53), "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." He is addressing living men ; but *the life* they have not got who do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man.

Natural death doth not terminate existence. In Luke xvi., our Lord describes one who hath not "*the life*"—only natural existence. And He describes him as passing out of this state into natural existence in

hell. Clearly, he had not "the life." In "hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments."

In Mark ix. 42-48, they have existence, but not "*the life*."

As death has various significations in Scripture, so the word of God uses the expression "life" in various significations. Sometimes life is used to express the short term of existence bounded by our birth and our grave, a span long, a shadow that declineth.

Sometimes life is used to express the natural functions of living, the period of man's natural existence, his motions of life, thought, and actions.

Again, life is used to express the eternal life supplying the spiritual, heavenly existence which man lives when in union with the Lord Jesus Christ, in the enjoyment of God, and in peace with God.

Again, it is used to express the life of bliss in heaven with God hereafter, and the life of glory.

Again life is used to express Christ living in the child of God. Also the quickening energy of the Holy Ghost living in the soul. When God made man He gave him spiritual life, but *that* life man lost by sin; and as far as man is concerned it is irrecoverable by him; and only as a *gift* from and by Jesus Christ is he now able to get it. But although man thus lost his spiritual life, he did not lose the *love of God* through sin; he lost his position and his life, but not the love of God. (John i. 1-5.) After that beginning the Creator and Author of life became man, and "dwelt among us;" for "God so loved the world," &c.

1 John i. 1-3.—Partnership in the life of God through Christ and in Christ. "These things write we

unto you, that your joy may be full." "I am come that they might have *life*, and that they might have it more abundantly." "I lay down My *life* for the sheep." . . . "I lay it down of Myself." "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Mark the action of life. He lays it down as an atonement for our sins. He raises it again to be the gift of His love. Eternal life, thus manifested, is the gift of God ; but no longer a gift, but the very life of God bestowed on us in Christ (verse 57): "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." The life of God was to be reproduced in man—communicated first to Christ through God the Father, and then through Him to all who believe on Him. (Verses 34, 35, 54.) *Coming* to Christ by faith, *believing* in Christ, *drawing* upon Christ, *feeding* on Christ, *drinking* into Christ, all symbolically express this life given to the believer. It is the Spirit that quickeneth. Our Lord was speaking to Jews, and the figure of eating was a familiar expression, as we learn from Jer. xv. 16: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them ; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." It implies appropriating, taking in the words by the ear, the understanding, and the heart, and the receiving joy and faith by means of the precious truth proclaimed.

In Ezek. iii. 13, he receives the word of God into his affection and soul, so that there may be no mistake.

In Isa. lv. 1, we have the same figure again. It is the promises He would have them feast upon by

faith; receiving the truth of God into the heart. "Whoso eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." He is not alluding to the Lord's Supper, although our Lord afterwards left it as a precious illustration of our union with Christ. Also, He compares Himself to the manna which was the food of the Israelites while on their wilderness journey.

For we too are on a journey, passing through a wilderness. And we have here a picture of what the Lord had in His heart in giving us Christ. May the Lord give us the appetite which Christ only can satisfy. "My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed."

The life Christ bestows is the communication of *His entire self*. Christ is our life, and He gives us His whole self, spiritually and corporally. "I live, yet not I, but *Christ* liveth in me." "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one."

"He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him." The man that feeds on Christ appropriates Him by faith; there is a communication of all the fulness of the Godhead bodily to the man who is in union with the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the eternal life that God gives to His people. "Because I live, ye shall live also." Believe in Christ, and you are united to Christ; feast upon Him, appropriate Him, drink into the Spirit of Christ, and then you have divine life in Christ. The Father is the *Author* of this divine life; the Son is the *Source* of it; the Holy Ghost is the *Agent* of it; the Gospel of the Blessed God is the seed of it; and the poor sinner is the *recipient* of it.

We have, in natural life, the *birth*, the *infancy*—for life is progressive in its development—the *youth*, the *manhood*, the *fatherhood*, the *age*. Then the body is dissolved, but the life does not cease on that account; death cannot kill eternal life, for “I am the resurrection and the *life*,” says Christ. Jesus is the firstborn from the dead; and the soul that is in Christ becomes one of the followers of the first-begotten from the dead, rises into life eternal, going on and on there, inheriting, reigning in life, becoming assimilated to Him, and ascending into, who can tell, what heights of His love!

“Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness, joy, peace, and glory for the upright in heart.”

THE BLOOD.

LEV. XVII. 10, 11.—To-day we will consider the subject of the *Blood*: "I have given the blood to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls."

In the Bible, by the blood the Spirit means *life forfeited*. The blood poured forth upon the earth, or offered to God in sacrifice, or sprinkled before the mercy-seat, on the altar, or the worshipper, represents *life forfeited*, the penalty for sin. From the time man sinned he lost all claim or title to life; he was cut off from the tree of life, and the blood, which was the life, was prohibited to men as sinners to be used in any wise; it was forfeited to God. The only use to be made of it was when, as a gift from God to the sinner, it was to be presented to Him in sacrifice, or sprinkled on the worshipper for his acceptance before God.

Our text speaks of the blood as God's *gift*, and shows the connection between the blood and the altar. The altar was the most conspicuous part of the furniture of the tabernacle, the meeting-place between God and the sinner. There every sacrifice was to be offered. Not a human sacrifice, which might have been the case if God had intended to visit on man the consequence of his own sin, but animals were appointed by God to be slain, and then blood offered

as a substitute for the forfeited life of him who was the worshipper ; and when the poor sinner would draw nigh to God, and came to this meeting-place, he would there find other blood offered than his own, and by virtue of that blood poured forth and sprinkled on every side—the substituted blood—he would be accepted.

There was fire always burning on that altar, kindled in the first instance by a flash of light from the mercy-seat, and fed continually by the sacrifice of the morning and evening lamb. And on the ground of that sacrificed lamb and the shed blood, any sinner in Israel might approach Jehovah. Of course, every intelligent Israelite would see that the blood of bulls and of goats could not in themselves make atonement for the soul, and that those sacrifices were but shadows and pictures of a greater thing, which was promised first in Eden when Adam fell ; and then afterwards, from time to time, by pictures and prophets, was shown what God intended in “the Lamb of God which should take away the sin of the world.”

We will refer to four chapters to open out to us this wondrous study.

In Gen. xxii., where we have in figure God’s only begotten Son offered on the altar ; and to this our Lord alludes when He says, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day : and he saw it, and was glad.” We read there of the ram provided as the substitute, and the delighted way in which God accepts the faith of Abraham: “By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee.” The dear Lord was thinking of

what He was about to do Himself. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and gave His Son for the propitiation for our sins." That chapter teaches us the source and spring from whence that Great Sacrifice was provided, from the *Father's heart*. Christ's death was the manifestation of the Father's love. "God commended His love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly." If a less sacrifice would have sufficed, Christ would not have been sacrificed: "Father, *if* it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." But it was not possible; nothing but a divine atonement could give satisfaction for sin to a holy God.

In Ex. xii., we have the *application* of the blood, sprinkled before God, not before the sinner; the sinner is not even in the position to *see* the blood. (Verse 13.) "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when *I* see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt"—a picture of the efficacy of the blood of Christ, the solitary protection of Israel that night, when the judgment of God was poured out upon Egypt. The forfeited life of the lamb represented the blood of Christ, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Here you see the blood *redeemed* Israel, *separated* them from Egypt, *protected* them from the destroyer. It was the blood of doom to the Egyptians, while it was the blood of liberty to the Israelites.

What are we doing with the blood? Those who do not go for shelter behind that blood will one day be accused of trampling it under their feet. But the blood did more than this for the Israelities: it provided a guide for them through the wilderness, a passage through the sea, and a home for them in the Canaan beyond; for when they got there they kept the Passover, connecting their deliverance and their rest together. They owed their deliverance from Egypt to the blood, and they owed their rest in Canaan to the blood also.

In Lev. xvi. 33, we have an account of the splendid atonement made, and yet it was only a shadow, and had to be repeated once a year "to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year." (Verse 34.) "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. ix. 14.) Moreover, in the context of that tenth of Leviticus we have the account of the death of Nadab and Abihu, which happened on the same day as that which is recorded in chapter xvi. They were *priests*, all right; they had right censers, and the place they entered into was the Holy Place, all right so far; but there was *no fire* from the altar of sacrifice, and in consequence they died. People say their prayers and go to church all right, but where is the fire? they offer strange fire, their own emotions and feelings. It was fire fed by the sacrifice on the blood that was to be offered; and that fire must underlie all our services, else they are an abomination to the Lord.

Then there are minute directions given in Lev. xvi. Aaron takes in the blood into the Holy Place—the satisfaction, the forfeited life—and, having presented it, he comes back, putting his hands on the head of the live goat, he confesses over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and sends him away into the wilderness. “Christ being come,” &c. (Heb. ix. 11.) See Christ going into heaven itself with His own blood—the forfeited life, the substitution for sinners—and obtaining eternal redemption. And then he sends down the Holy Ghost to tell the story; and the story is the Gospel of the grace of God, the blood sprinkled, and accepted for poor sinners.

In Num. xix., we have that marvellous arrangement for the wilderness. The daily defilements of the wilderness there provided for—the red heifer, still Christ, but another aspect of His precious blood; the red heifer burnt to ashes. The best comment on this we have in John xiii. 1-10, that is, not the washing of atonement, but the daily need. In going from the bath to the robing-room the feet may be defiled; so Christ cleanseth the daily defilements of the feet by virtue of the fountain opened in His side. (1 John i.) “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ *is* cleansing us from all sin.” If we walk in the beautiful light of God’s face, we are admitted there by the blood of atonement; but, oh! the defilement, the spots and stains that are discovered to us by that light; and so we have cleansing by the red heifer, that we may not be hindered from walking in the light by the defilements of the way. And thus

we have the four aspects of the blood of Christ in reference to its application to our need :—

1. We come to the blood of sprinkling.
2. We have the application of the blood.
3. The appropriation of the blood.
4. The blood as exhibited for us before God.

The blood as surrendered on our behalf, and presented as the substitute for our blood before God. The blood of Christ cries for pardon on His murderers, and *peace* for His people. (Heb. xiii. 20.)

Lev. xvii. 10.—But this law was abrogated, when fulfilled by Christ. The blood, that was for God alone under the law, is now the food of God's children. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." We get life from that. It was the gift presented to God as the ground of our salvation, and then given back as the food of our salvation. And the Holy Ghost is here to witness that, when Christ died, Justice said it is enough, Holiness said it is enough, Truth said it is enough, and the Father in Heaven said it is enough. Justice is satisfied ; sin put away ; death abolished ; "mercy and peace have met together, righteousness and truth have kissed each other." The spear went into the Saviour's side, and forthwith came there out blood and water ; the blood atoning for sin, the water cleansing our souls. We need both. Through the blood we are *redeemed, forgiven, justified, made nigh, made kings and priests*. We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood. The blood cleanseth us from all sin, and "by one offering He hath *perfected* for ever them that are sanctified." And "blessed are they that

wash their robes, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city." (Rev. xxii. 14.)

Of the white-robed multitude, we read that "they have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Of the consecrated kings and priests in glory, and those on earth, we read, "Thou hast done it by Thy blood." (Rev. i. 5) "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood." And the highest anthem in heaven shall be, "Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." And in the meantime the way is opened up, "a new and living way, which He hath consecrated to us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh;" for the veil is rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and there is no barrier now between the poor sinner and the throne of Christ, but we may go in by faith, and *live on Christ.*

GRACE.

ROM. XI. 5, 6.—Grace is our subject to-day. It is a word of vast significance. “For by grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God : not of works, lest any man should boast.” “And if by grace, then is it no more of works : otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace : otherwise work is no more work.”

What is grace ? We are told in the word of God that it means the free, sovereign, and eternal love and favour of God—that free eternal love of God, which is, in other words, God Himself, for “God is love,” and is the source and spring of all the promises made to us, and the benefits bestowed on us poor needy sinners in Jesus Christ.

In Eph. i. 2-13, ii. 1-8, we have an account of grace ; also in 2 Tim. i. 9. Observe, it is grace, irrespective of our merits, given in Christ *before the world began* ; grace secured to us in Christ before we were allowed to fall into sin. He gave us a place in Christ before we existed in ourselves ; and there is no man that knoweth his own need that may not ground his hope of salvation in this, and “it is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ,

who hath abolished death, and hath brought light and immortality to light through the Gospel."

This abounding grace—abounding where sin abounds—is altogether out of the resources of the love of God's own heart, entirely irrespective of any qualification in you or me. The only condition is our need, our helplessness. God knows we are helpless enough. The condition of salvation is the sinfulness of the saved: "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Some ask, "How am I to be a partaker of this? What must I do?" You have *nothing* to do. Some think they must repent more, have more sense of sin, and more sorrow for it. All sense of sin, sorrow for sin, and repentance are the *fruits* of grace. (Zech. xii. 10) "I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of *grace*"—that is the first step—"and of *supplication*"—that is the next. Get grace first, and then comes the spirit of prayer—"And they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn." See where the mourning of a sinner comes! Out of a view of a pierced Saviour. Mortification for and on account of sin, the *fruit* of grace. By the grace of God we are what we are. You remember how St. Peter speaks of grace. (1 Peter i. 2.) They were not chosen because God saw they would be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, but chosen *unto* obedience, chosen *to be* sprinkled. All the benefits we receive through Jesus Christ are due to the grace of God; to the work accomplished for us more than 1,800 years ago; the

love given to us before the world was. (Tit. ii. 11, 12.) It is all of grace from beginning to end. (1 Tim. i. 13, 14.) The same grace that bestowed on Paul salvation wrought in him also love and faith, for they were also in Christ Jesus. "The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant *with* faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." Salvation came from Christ on account of grace, and the faith and love is of Christ also.

We also find this word grace expressing the fulness that is laid up in Christ for the benefit of us sinners (John i. 16): "Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace," teaching us that all the fulness that is laid up in Christ is grace, and that grace is to be received by us, grace for grace, grace corresponding to every grace that is laid up in Christ, that we too may be filled with all the fulness of God. And also (verse 14): "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of *grace* and truth." And in Exod. xxxiv., where God proclaims His name to Moses, He begins by saying, "The Lord, the Lord God merciful and *gracious*"—that is, the God of the Old Testament. And now we have "the Word dwelling among us, full of *grace* and truth," that you and I might receive grace for grace. Grace gives us life, pardon, justification, strength; delivers us from the bondage of corruption, and by-and-bye will deliver our bodies from the grave and death. And this grace is all free, out of the abounding love of Him of whom it is said, *He is love*.

Again we find grace in the word of God used in

another aspect. The love that led Christ to stoop from heaven to die for us, is called grace: "Ye know the *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." And this is not all. Again we find the *work of the Holy Ghost*, in applying all this fulness of Christ to the individual soul of the believer, is called grace. Born of the Spirit, taught of the Spirit in grace, interceded for by the Spirit, quickened by the Spirit, and by-and-bye to be raised from the dead by the Spirit. (Rom. viii. 11.)

There are three expressions used in the New Testament expressing the freeness and fulness of grace:—

1. In Col. i. 13: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." It is *done*; He *hath* translated us.

2. In Jas. i. 18: "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." He takes us, in believing His truth, *out* of our old nature, making us a kind of *firstfruits* of His creatures. What grace! If you want to live for God, you will just do it in proportion as you feed on these things.

3. In Eph. ii. 10: "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." And the enjoyment of this is what is called the communion of the Holy Ghost. I will pour out My Spirit like rivers of water in the wilderness, fountains in the desert, to be in you a well of living water

springing up into everlasting life. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

This Book is called grace, because it reveals these things : "I commend you to God, and to the *word of His grace*." The Gospel of the Grace of God is called grace : "Receive not the grace of God in vain."

In Eph. iii. 8, we have grace in another sense : "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." The privilege of being permitted to proclaim these things is called grace.

And lastly, in Rom. v. and viii., we have the believer's standing before God, all in grace. In chapter viii. 29, 30, all done for us in Christ Jesus. And in chapter v. we have the believer's *standing* followed up, being *justified*, having *peace*, enjoying *access to grace*, *standing in grace*, *rejoicing in hope* and expecting the glory of God. There is the position in which grace has placed us. Therefore, no charge can be brought against us, there is no condemnation, and no separation. We are told that in that day "our iniquities shall be sought for, and shall not be found;" for "being justified freely by his grace, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Such is the standing of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

God has been pleased to select this attribute from all the others, for His throne, and to that throne He commands and invites us. "Let us come

boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy;" not that we might be refused, but "find *grace* to help us in time of need"—abundant grace. Nothing is too hard for grace to give; nothing too rich for grace to bestow; for "God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound unto every good work." Why? Because "*grace reigns*;" "through righteousness," justice is satisfied, the law fulfilled, atonement made, the veil rent in twain from the top to the bottom. And it is "unto eternal life," through Christ our Lord.

If these things be so, let none be hindered from coming: "Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely." No want of qualification need deter you, for none is asked; Jesus has done it all. He came, saying, "Lo! I come to do Thy will, O My God." Let no man fail of the grace of God. "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and come to the throne of grace, where God gives all grace graciously; *quickening* grace, *supplying* grace, *supporting* grace, *resting* grace, *forgiving* grace, *spending* grace for your journey, and *resting* grace at the end.

REDEMPTION.

1 PET. I. 18-21.—Redemption is our subject to-day. The word in its common use means the deliverance of anyone from captivity and misery by the intervention of a price or ransom ; it has reference to a price paid, a ransom provided. The Bible uses the word in the same sense. Redemption supposes the state of the persons to be redeemed, to be a state of misery and captivity—a state in which they are poor, blind, naked, helpless, miserable, lost ; and that the ransom or price of their deliverance, their redemption, “was not with silver or gold or corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” And that He paid it to obtain that redemption, we have His own words in Matt. xx. 28 : “Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

The redemption by Christ must be contrasted in many respects with all other redemptions. First of all, Christ has redeemed us not only from captivity and misery, but from *guilt*, and from the penalty due from us on account of our having contracted that guilt. The redemption of Christ not only delivers us from the state of ruin in which it found us, but introduces

us into a state of glory which God provided when He gave His dear Son not only to be the ransom for our souls, but to exalt us to the throne of God.

Again, this redemption not only redeems us from guilt by the blood, but justifies us before God by the blood. (Rom. iii. 24.) Ordinary redemption does not justify the redeemed; but the blood of Jesus Christ justifies the soul that it redeems. And more than this, it not only justifies, but it *sanctifies* the soul it redeems; it consecrates the man so redeemed, body, soul, and spirit, to be a king and a priest unto God. (Rev. v. 9, 10.)

Again, the redemption of Christ is not like other redemptions, delivering us from the power of the person from whom we are redeemed; but it brings us *into the favour of Him* who has redeemed us. (Rom. iii. 24-26.) Christ's blood not only delivers us from our vain conversation, but introduces us into the favour of the Lord God Almighty. Not only has the Judge been satisfied by the redemption of Christ, but the jailor has been conquered; for it has not only made us nigh, but has abolished death: "Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly," triumphing over them in it. And everlastingly it has put away all barriers between Him who is the Holy, Holy, Holy God, and the poor, guilty, lost, condemned, captive sinner.

This splendid redemption, which was purposed in the heart of God to be carried out, was pictured and shadowed forth in the times and circumstances of Old Testament history. Follow me for a little on this subject.

The Lord was pleased not only to promise redemption when man sinned, but He was pleased to illustrate the great purpose of His heart in the matter of redemption. He chose out a family, an elect people ; for it is *God's elect people*, believe me, who are redeemed. So he chose out of all nations the people of Israel, an elect people, to be in a typical way redeemed, in order, by this typical redemption, to illustrate what God had for His elect people. I do not believe in a price laid out that did not pay the ransom. When the Father gave His Son to purchase His people, He meant to do it. I do not believe in a redemption which does not redeem, nor in a Saviour who does not save. And so the Father sent His Son to pay the price by His own death, and the Holy Ghost came down to apply the work to those for whom Christ died. See the unity of purpose in the Father giving His Son, the Son giving Himself, and the Holy Spirit coming down to apply the work to the heart of the poor sinner who believes God.

God's secret purpose from all eternity was, that a people should be redeemed for the bride of Christ. The Lord had chosen His people by promise, as we read in Exod. vi. 5-8. Then He teaches them of this redemption and their need of it. How did God find them, when He first taught them their need of redemption? In Egypt, worshipping the idols of Egypt ; in degradation, under the captivity of Egypt, suffering under an iron bondage ; and the Lord was not appealed to by them, there was nothing good He saw in them, and over and over again He tells them it was not because they were better than others that

He chose them ; no, they were "a stiffnecked people." (It is *sovereign grace*, and not merit in us, that has ever induced God to choose any of us.) The people were groaning in Egypt, but God remembered His promise, and "sent redemption unto His people." There they were in helpless ignorance of God, and God sends a message to them, "Take a lamb," &c. The lamb was to be slain (the Lamb of God in purpose from the foundation of the world), and the blood to be sprinkled outside the houses, and all the firstborn of Israel were redeemed to God that night. In consequence of that redemption all the firstborn of Israel became God's property, bought by the price of the blood. Every Israelite behind the blood that night was safe. Why? Because by *God's command*, the blood was between him and judgment. There was the blood outside, in its solemn grandeur, in view of God ; and not one child of Israel suffered that night : not their merit, but the blood stood between them and judgment. When the blood is sprinkled on the soul, that man belongs to God, and all the powers of death and hell cannot take him from God.

The Lord would also have another picture in Israel of what He meant in His infinite love by redemption. He appointed a tribe to represent the firstborn. He chose the tribe of Levi, and they were to have no part in Israel, for the Lord was their portion. Their service, their ministry, their occupation, was for the Lord, because they represented a redeemed people. From them the High Priest was taken—"the firstborn among many brethren." So

long as it was all right with the High Priest it was all right with the people of Israel.

We have another picture. The Lord commands a numbering of the Levites, and of the firstborn redeemed to Him by the blood. The Levites numbered 22,000 (Num. iii. 39), but the firstborn numbered 22,273; so 273 were redeemed by the blood over and above those the Levites represented. So the Lord commanded an atonement-price (half-a-shekel) to be put on the head of each of these, and that atonement represented in picture the blood of redemption, and it was handed over to the High Priest. So everyone redeemed that night was represented either by the Levites or the price that the Lord appointed for the redemption-money.

Another picture. The tabernacle was commanded to be set up, that beautiful dwelling-place where God dwelt with His people, that meeting-place where God met with them. And before the tabernacle was set up a numbering of the children of Israel was again commanded, and every man that had to do any service in that tabernacle must be represented in it. No man who was not redeemed might meet God; but, if redeemed, he was to recognize himself as having part in that beautiful house where God was in the midst of the children of Israel during all their wanderings.

In Ex. xxx. 11-15, we have the command, that all the money that was to be paid for an atonement for their souls was appointed for the service of the tabernacle. Each was to give half-a-shekel. "The

rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less." All the Lord's redeemed are equally precious, rich and poor the same, all valued at the same price. This, the atonement-money, became the Lord's. He could not look at them but on the ground of redemption. And what was to be done with all this silver? The foundation of the pillars of the tabernacle were laid in the redemption-money of the children of Israel. There was no earthly foundation laid for that house. Sometimes it was pitched in the beautiful fields, and sometimes on the arid sand; but a foundation was provided under all circumstances by the redemption-money. Each redeemed man might look, and say, "I have got my place in that beautiful tent." Each individual was to take his own place there. The amount of silver is computed at four tons; but it is not spoken of in the lump, but as half-a-shekel for *each man*. Redemption is not a sort of general thing, as you too often hear it spoken of—such a deceptive, ensnaring doctrine! No, redemption is a matter for *each* individual. The half-shekel each man gave, and claimed his own individual place in that tabernacle. (Eph. ii. 19-22.) We who believe "are built upon the foundation," &c.; each believing soul has his recognized place there. What we want is to be able to say, "He loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*," not *us*. That is the consecrating, hallowing, justifying truth—the truth that fills the soul of the believer with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

It is the *personal* appropriation of a *personal* redemption by faith in a *personal* Saviour. A redemp-

tion that does not redeem is not worth having, and a salvation that does not save is not worth preaching.

Another picture. The Lord appointed one year out of seven to be a type of this redemption in Israel—the Sabbatical year—when labour ceased and the land was to rest. All were remitted, and every servant was free.

Another picture. Lev. xxv. Every seven seventh year was to be an absolute jubilee ; the silver trumpets were to proclaim it on the day of atonement, when the High Priest had come forth from sprinkling the blood. In Psal. lxxxix. 15, we have an allusion to this.

Then we have a picture of the redeemer, as well as the redemption. He was to be the near kinsman of the redeemed. No stranger could redeem Israel ; he must be one of themselves. (Heb. ii. 14.) Moreover, the redeemer married the widow when he redeemed the widow's portion. We have it beautifully pictured in the history of Ruth. When Boaz redeemed Ruth's inheritance, he married herself. We have in Christ our Redeemer, who gave His life for us ; He made Himself our next of kin and our avenger.

And lastly, we have the fulfilment. (Heb. ix. 11, 12.) He has received from the hands of God our pardon, our liberty, our deliverance, His right to unite us to Himself, our justification, our joint heirship, and our glory. In Rev. v., we have the scene in heaven, the only time we read of tears in heaven. There is the throne, and man's lost title-deeds in the hands of the just Judge. Man was captive, bankrupt, lost, ruined,

and bound ; and no man was worthy to look upon the book, or to open the seals thereof ; but (verse 5) the Lamb of God takes possession of man's lost inheritance ; and, till the redemption of the purchased possession, He gives us the pledge of the Holy Spirit of promise in our hearts, "*the earnest of our inheritance.*" And in the meantime we are waiting for it, as we read in Rom. viii. 23 : "Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." The blood has gone in, and our souls are redeemed by Christ, and the Holy Ghost has come down and taken possession of us, the earnest of the redemption of our bodies. Our Redeemer has taken possession of heaven for us ; and all His redeemed ones are taken possession of by the Holy Ghost. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." And if the Holy Ghost has taken possession of you for Christ, He is the earnest of an inheritance which is incorruptible, and undefiled, and which fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." Your soul is already quickened by that Spirit, if He is there ; for He quickens the souls of all His redeemed. He has redeemed your souls out of darkness, curse, ruin, into the glorious liberty of the children of God ; and by-and-bye your bodies shall also be redeemed in the resurrection (Rom. viii. 11), and then body and soul together shall be called into the inheritance. God Himself, the inheritance of His people.

Of the New Jerusalem, that holy city, we read (Rev. xxi. 22), "that the Lord God Almighty and the

Lamb are the temple of it," *our* inheritance. Now, will you say in loving trust with Job (xix. 25-27): "I *know* that *my Redeemer* liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me"?

SUBSTITUTION.

PART I.

ISA. LIII. 11.—“He shall bear their iniquities.”

In this chapter we have revealed to us, long before it came to pass, the purpose hidden in the heart of God, that, in the fulness of time, He would save His people with an everlasting salvation.

We have been considering the salvation work of Christ in different aspects ; its nature and character is so marvellously great that the Spirit of God has been pleased, in order to help our faith and to establish and to strengthen us in Christ, to represent that work in various points of view. Numberless are the expressions setting forth the salvation work of Christ ; and, in order that there should be no mistake, we have numberless illustrations given us in the word of God setting forth the salvation work of God.

“The flock which He hath purchased with His own blood.” (Acts xx. 28.)

“Ye are not your own : ye are bought with a price.” (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.)

“Redeemed not with corruptible things, as silver and gold ; but with the precious blood of Christ.” (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.)

He came “to make reconciliation for iniquity.” (Dan. ix. 24.)

And in this 53rd chapter of Isaiah there are many expressions setting forth the substitution of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ for His people.

Our subject to-day is *substitution*—the keynote of the salvation work of Christ. Men are only saved on the ground of Christ having taken their place and suffered in their stead. We do not find the *word* substitution in the Bible, but it is full of the *thing*. “He loved me and gave Himself for—*i.e., instead of—me.*” “Christ suffered the just for—*i.e., instead of—the unjust.*” All the salvation work of Christ is the outflow of the love of His heart; and the gift of Christ is the outflow of the Father’s love to us poor sinners. The whole security we have for our soul’s salvation is grounded on this simple fact, that *Christ took our place.*

The substitution of Christ implies four things:—

1. He assumed our nature. He could not be our substitute as *God*; it is the man that sinned, and man alone must suffer. God could not be the substitute for the sinner. Nor could man be the substitute of his fellow-man. If one man could be the substitute for the sin of all the others, it would be a mockery of justice, a setting aside of God’s law, an insult to God’s character. And so, in order to be the substitute, God had to become man, and He is God-man in one person. The great mystery of salvation is hinged, as it were, on this marvellous union—God-man, one Christ—that *that* Christ might be able to suffer, and to take my place as a sinner before God.

Oh! that wondrous union between God and man! Hear the voice of the poor condemned members of the mystical body of Christ uttering their wail through

the mouth of their Head, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" And then hear the voice of the Head from the mouth of His members, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" In 1 Cor. xii., we have the truth revealed that underlies the possession as well as the fact of the substitution of Christ for His people (verse 12); and then the consequence (verse 26). There is the picture of a sacred thing set forth by a natural thing—the human body. It represents the head and members united, and they cannot be separated except by death. Both are united; put a crown on the head, and the whole body is crowned. Now, says the word of God, so also is Christ. The Head became united to the mystical body when Christ took our nature and became responsible for our curse; assumed our nature and died in our stead. "I am crucified with Christ;" that is the first thing implied in substitution. "He *bare* our iniquities;" not merely was punished, but "*bare* our iniquities." He could not have been punished for our iniquities if He had not borne them. It does not mean the iniquities of *everyone*. He is speaking of those who believe; who are united to Christ. You must be united to Christ, before you can be affected by His substitution. (John xvii. 20.) It is union to Christ by faith on my part that causes me to have interest in His substitution. He is speaking here to believers—those who are united to Him; if you are united to Christ, you are a member of Christ, else you can have no interest in His sufferings. If a member suffers, the Head suffers too: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Are you a

member of Christ ; for if not, you have no interest in His substitution ; but if you are Christ's, then all He is and all He has done is *for you*, and the gift of God is proclaimed to you, for the obedience of faith.

2. Another thing implied by the substitution of Christ is that He did, voluntarily, and of His own love and free will, undertake the responsibility of our position ; otherwise, He is no true substitute : "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God ; I delight to do Thy will ; yea, Thy law is within My heart." What was that law ? To die in the sinner's place ; to take the sinner's debt and pay it : the debt is forfeited life. For this reason we find Christ called the "*Surety* of a better covenant." We are taught in the word of God what a surety means (Gen. xliii. 9), where Judah proposes himself as surety for the restoration and safety of Benjamin, who was held captive in Egypt : "I will be surety for him ; of my hand shalt thou require him : if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever." See what Christ undertakes when He becomes Surety for the New Testament : "I will go and bear the blame ; I will suffer instead of them ; I am responsible to produce them, every one ; My Father gives them Me, and I undertake to present them every one, without spot or wrinkle, before the presence of His glory. And if not, then I bear the blame for ever." Put yourself into the hands of your Surety ; He will accomplish all ; He has pledged His eternal self for all ; and if one is lost, I "bear the blame for ever." In Gen. xliv. 32, we have Judah putting before Joseph the awful position he is placed in if Joseph will not

let Benjamin go: "For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever."

Then look at the Epistle to Philemon, where Paul proposes himself to be surety for Onesimus to Philemon (verses 17, 18): "If Thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself." Imagine Christ saying to His Father, "If Thou count Me Thy partner, Thy fellow, receive that poor sinner as Myself." Can you say "He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*?" If you can, then hear Jesus saying, "Father receive him, her, as Myself." Mark the complete identification on which alone substitution can be founded (verse 18): "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought." Oh! how much we owe Him—"put that on mine account." Do you believe it? "I Paul have written it with mine own hand, *I will repay it.*" Christ has written it in His own blood, and has repaid it. That is what is meant by a surety.

3. When Christ became the substitute for the sinner, another fact is implied. The *complete transfer* of all responsibility, guilt, condemnation, and cause of condemnation from the sinner *to the Saviour*, the sinner's substitute. If you do not believe in this, you do not believe in substitution. Do you give Him credit for this,—that the blessed Jesus actually took your place, became your Substitute, transferring all your sins, iniquities, and transgressions to Himself, who gave His soul an offering for your sin? This is the keynote of the Gospel. God took the guilt from the sinner, and laid it on another, and yet *not another*,

for His suffering was all the same in the sight of a just and offended God as our suffering. There can be no substitution for anyone who is not in union with Jesus Christ. It would be a most unrighteous thing of God to put my sin on Christ, if I were not united to Christ.

4. If there is the transfer of your guilt, condemnation, and curse from your head to the Head of the mystical body, then there is no sin on you. Do you believe that? If God were to condemn you, supposing you belong to Christ, He would be doing a most unjust thing, because He would be condemning you, having also condemned your Substitute. But "there is now *no condemnation* to them that are in Christ Jesus." "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." And why? "I have blotted them out" in the blood of your Substitute; "Cast them behind My back for ever." Where? Into the depths of the sea. Now, if you say that sin can be charged on the soul of him who believes on Christ, you are sadly insulting Christ's work. It is *unbelief*, and not humility, to doubt God's word.

This was always the thought in the heart of God (1 Peter i. 17-20): "Foreordained" to be man, "foreordained" to be the Adam, "foreordained" to be the Substitute, "foreordained" to be the husband of the Church; "but was manifest in these last times for *you* who by Him do believe in God"—in this blessed fact, the substitution of the Head for the members by virtue of His union with the members, rests the salvation the members enjoy by union with their Head. If we are not united, we have *nothing*. There are various illustrations given us in

the word of God of this union. The husband and wife, the vine and the branches—the same life animating, permeating, and fructifying the whole tree. This is the glorious Gospel. This new covenant of which Christ is the surety is not an offer of a salvation more easy to be obtained now than formerly under the Old Dispensation ; but it is a dispensation of a proclaimed, finished salvation, to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be subtracted, and which is “unto all and upon all them that believe.” If we reject it, on our head be the sin. If we receive it, we belong to Christ, and are become members of that Head which is sitting on the throne of God ; that Head which is risen from the dead ; that Head which has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and in putting it away has done it on the ground of its transfer from you to Him. And the command of God to you is, “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

There are wonderful illustrations of substitution throughout the Bible ; but we must leave the rest of the subject till next time. In the meantime, come and claim Christ, the gift of God.

SUBSTITUTION.

PART II.

1 PET. I. 18-21.—I desire to-day to follow up the subject of our last Lecture, *Substitution*. It is a precious fact, and a precious subject.

Here we are taught that the Lord Jesus Christ was foreordained—to what? to be our Substitute; and that, “before the foundation of the world,” God saw what the need of the sinner would be—what the utter helplessness of the sinner to meet that need would be, and that only the Lord Jesus coming as the Substitute could meet it.

Heb. ii. 14.—“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

Before the devil was allowed to have dominion, God foreordained that Christ was to take our nature, to battle with the lion of hell; and “it became Him, for whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.” To be the Captain of our salvation, and to be perfected through suffering, the Saviour was foreordained; and in order to be *our* Captain, and to be perfected through suffering, He must take our nature.

We saw last time that there were four things implied in His substitution :—

1. That He must take our nature. God, as God, could not be the Substitute for our sins ; “ He was made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.”

2. He must have undertaken this *willingly*, for if by constraint, it would not be justice ; but “ I delight to do Thy will, O My God.” “ Lo, I come, to do Thy will.” “ Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again.” The laying down of that precious life was the substitution made by Christ for the forfeited life of every one who takes Him for his Saviour.

3. This substitution implies the absolute transfer of all our guilt and sin to the head of our Substitute. “ The Lord hath laid ”—transferred—“ on Him the iniquity of *us all*.” “ Us all,” means those who *believe on Christ*, and only those. The iniquity of those who resist His Gospel and continue in unbelief could never be transferred to Christ. You must be identified with Him, and He with you, ere His substitution can affect you. “ Father, I pray for all them who shall believe on Me, through the disciples’ word, that they may be one in Us.” All substitution must be founded on the identification of the substitute with the sinner, and there can be no identification between any man and Christ but on the ground of faith in Him. Your debt has passed from your soul to Him who has taken your debt.

4. The fourth truth implied in this substitution is a grand truth. Oh ! what liberty, joy, peace, and blessing

there is in it! That the sin that has been transferred from the sinner to the Saviour, leaves *no sin* on the sinner. If the Great Father in virtue of His love, and of the voluntary undertaking of my debt by Christ, has taken my transgressions, my sins, from my soul, and transferred them to my Substitute, and has allowed Him to be crucified as my Substitute, then there can be no sin on me. I am crucified with Christ, dead with Him, and buried with Him; and that is not all, the union continues literally whilst my Substitute is in heaven. He was on the cross, now He is on the throne, the earnest and seal that by-and-bye I shall be there too; and meanwhile He holds the position for me. Is it not full of peace? "Because I live, ye shall live also." The most precious thing to God was the blood of Christ, because it was the life of Christ; and that precious thing was given, laid down, because He took my place; and now, in virtue of His having paid the debt, He has entitled me to heaven, and also opened up the way to glory, the new and living way, a shining path along which we may go; and we have the same warrant as He had to enter heaven—His own precious blood.

The union between the soul that believes on Christ and Christ is an *ineffable* union, it is an *indescribable* union; there is no shadow of it in the Old Testament. The union of husband and wife is frequently used as an illustration of union, also the vine and branches, the head and its members; all are used to illustrate the union that exists between Christ and His people—the same life, the same name. Also in Cor. xii. 12-13: "For as the body is one, and hath

many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body : so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." A living Christ has no union with any soul that has not been baptized by the Holy Ghost ; but he who is baptized by the Holy Ghost is a member of Christ, and *no other*. Baptism with water is merely a sign, an illustration of this great truth, a beautiful illustration, but *not* the thing itself. When Christ comes to speak of the reality of the union, He nowhere says He is one with His people as the husband and the wife, but as *Thou, Father, art in Me*, and *I in Thee*, that *they may be one in Us*." Who can tell the nature of *that* union ? and yet, so it is. He has taken possession of heaven in my person because of this union, and receiving this grand truth in my heart, what a joy, peace, and liberty it gives ! It is a separating thing. It gives something better than anything else can supply. But we are too apt to substitute external forms and rites—a poor substitute ; it is playing with the shadow, and you have not got the substance.

This substitution is not only shadowed forth in the New Testament by those emblems of husband and wife, &c., but from the beginning.

In Adam we have a picture of the foreordained Christ. His bride was created *in Adam*. When God made Adam in His own likeness, Eve was involved in it ; just as, when Christ was set up from everlasting, His people were involved in Him. "Adam was first formed, then Eve ; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." To Adam God presented his companion born out of

his deep sleep. When God comes to deal with fallen man, He does not say, "Eve, where art thou?" but He treats with *Adam*: "Adam, where art *thou*?" Not a word to Eve. There is substitution! Adam had to pay the penalty for Eve. Then again, when the Lord covered their nakedness with the skins of beasts there was the first sacrifice—Christ in picture. The first death in creation was Christ, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The animal was sacrificed to clothe the nakedness of sinners. There is substitution—the life of the animal forfeited instead of their life; and that life preserved through the covering of the forfeited life.

Then we have Abel's sacrifice accepted, and Cain's sacrifice not accepted—the one being the picture of Christ, the other not. Abel brought the living thing to be slain in place of the guilty thing; Cain brought his good fruits.

Then there was the ark, a picture of Christ. Noah enters into the ark with his redeemed family around him, and by-and-bye the flood came down on the ungodly, and on Noah and his family; but it fell *on the ark*, not on them; they are safe inside, and are lifted up to heaven by the very deluge and storms that are round about them. The storm beat not on Noah, but on the ark. If we are in Christ, the storms have descended not on us, but on Christ.

Then again, when Isaac was offered and Abraham was about to slay his son, there was a ram caught in a thicket and slain *instead*—Substitution—the ram sacrificed, Isaac goes free.

Then there was the Passover. There was Israel

unworthy and helpless, involved in all the guilt of Egypt, and even worshipping their idols (see Ezek. xx.); but the lamb was slain, and the blood sprinkled outside the doors of the houses of the Israelites, and justice was satisfied by the picture of the sacrifice of Christ. Then there was the scape goat. The sins of the congregation laid on the head of the goat, and that goat sent away into the wilderness, while his fellow was slain, and his blood was carried in within the veil to make atonement for sin.

And then, at the time of the crucifixion of Christ, you remember the cry: "Not this man, but Barabbas." One must be let free; if it had not been for Christ, Barabbas must have been crucified; the strange substitute for Barabbas that day was the Son of God. Imagine him standing among the crowd when the darkness was all round, or when the blood and water were issuing from the Saviour's heart. He might truly have said, "If you were not there, I should have been there." Oh! my brethren, can you look at that cross and say, If He were not there, I must perish; but because He was there and forsaken of His God, I shall never perish, and can never be forsaken of God? That is faith, have you got it? And not only was this substitution foreordained and foreshadowed before the foundation of the world, but God has demonstrated ever since that there is no other possible means of salvation. When Christ said, "Father, *if it be possible*, let this cup pass from Me," God told us that there was no possible way whereby the Holy One could have us in heaven if Christ had not become our Substitute, and died in our stead.

When God created Adam and Eve, He made them perfect as God could make them; and the very freedom of their will was the occasion of their fall. They fell in Eden, the garden of the Lord. Would any of us have done better? If man, in a perfect state, fell, could any of us have stood? And afterwards, the earth became so corrupt, notwithstanding all the privileges that surrounded man, that God at last said, "it repented Him that He had made man;" and a deluge, to sweep away the whole race, alone could satisfy Him. There was but one man in all the earth that feared God, and we are told of him, "*Noah found grace.*" He was not better than others; but God chose out one to be a monument of His grace, and to show how kind He was. And not satisfied with this, He afterwards chose a nation, out of all others; and the mercies showered on them were unspeakable, and what was the issue?

They were "a stiff-necked people." Never was God more insulted than He was by Israel; and yet He did not leave them without chastening. The twelve tribes were carried away captive, and at the time our Lord came those that remained "tithed mint and anise and cummin," but despised and neglected the weightier matters of the law. Even when they crucified the Lord their chief trouble was lest His dead body, hanging on the Cross on the Sabbath day, should contaminate their rites and ceremonies. But now the New Man is Christ Jesus, the Lord from heaven.

And now the new Eve created in Him are poor sinners who hear the word of God and keep it. You remember. (Mark iii. 31-35.) Since the New Man

has come we have got our life, our righteousness, our wisdom, our sanctification, and our redemption in Him.

He is our righteousness, delivering us from the *guilt of sin*.

He is our sanctification, delivering us from the *power of sin*.

And by-and-bye He will be our redemption from the presence of sin ; for " we are waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

ATONEMENT.

LEV. XVI. 16, 17.—“And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness. And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.”

The whole transaction is accomplished there by *one man*. (Verses 20, 21.) Observe the *atonement*, the *transfer*, the *removal*. A glorious gospel it is! Also read Lev. xxv. 8-10.

Our subject is Atonement. There can be no atonement without remission; and there can be no remission without shedding of blood. Atonement means *propitiation*, *expiation* for sin, *satisfaction* to justice. And this was evermore, according to the types of the Old and the teaching of the New Testament, by *sacrifice*. (Lev. xvii. 11.) “It is the blood that maketh atonement;” the blood means poured-out life—the poured-out life of an animal in the sacrifice in Old Testament times prefigured the poured-out life of Christ in New Testament times, a propitiation, an expiation, a satisfaction for sin. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die;” but the poured-out life of Christ

is the satisfaction for the sinner. When the Baptist proclaimed: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," the allusion was to the sacrifice of the daily lamb. Also in Isa. liii. 7: "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth."

When our Blessed Master Himself, at supper, presented the cup to His disciples, He said: "This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." And St. Paul, speaking of Christ as the propitiation, tells how "God has set Him forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood." And St. John: "He is the propitiation for our sins." They were looking back to the mercy-seat, the *propitiatory*, as it was called, and teaching those to whom they wrote to look beyond and above all earthly sanctuaries to Him who had Himself gone in within the veil, and there presented His own blood for the sin of sinners. No one needs now to propitiate God, nor to expiate sin, or pay the least farthing directly or indirectly; the work is all finished long ago. We are invited to come to the mercy-seat without money and without price, on the ground that a new and living way is opened for us through the veil; that is to say, His flesh. "Therefore, we have boldness now to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." We need offer no satisfaction. May God write this on all our hearts. Oh! it is liberty, a jubilee. "Once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself;" and there remaineth no more offering for sin.

This atonement work of Christ is represented to us in many aspects in the word of God.

As *purposed*. It was the purpose of Almighty God before the foundation of the world that sin should be atoned for.

It was *provided* in the everlasting covenant.

It was *promised* and *prefigured* in Old Testament types, *provided* in the mission of Christ from heaven, and *presented* in the gospel of the grace of God. It was *accepted* in heaven, that we may triumph and rejoice in it here below ; and plead it for the salvation of our own individual souls.

"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who ever liveth to make intercession for us."

It is *witnessed* by the Holy Ghost. Why is He here? just to testify of Jesus, to tell us that "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification," and "by grace we are saved through faith," and by Him "all that believe are justified from all things." Let us glance at these heads:—

Atonement was *purposed*.—In Rev. xiii. 8, we read of "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world," teaching us that, before the world was founded, sin was permitted and the atonement was purposed. God would not have allowed sin to interfere with His great purpose of love to His people ; and so, before sin was, He made an arrangement with the Saviour. Again, we read, in Titus i. 2, of "the hope of *eternal life*, which God, that cannot lie, *promised* before the world began." There is the grand purpose of God. And the coming of Jesus Christ was only the manifes-

tation and result of that promise. Abraham got a view of the promise when he was told to offer his son Isaac for a burnt offering (Gen. xxii. 7): "My father, . . . behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" And Abraham said: "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb," and so He did; and we read, in Isa. liii. 10, Christ's soul was made an offering for sin, and "He shall see of the *travail* of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Every new-born soul into the family of God is the fruit of the travail of Christ's soul. Travail is suffering, but all suffering is not travail. Travail has reference to birth, and every child of God is born of the travail of Christ's soul. (Dan. ix. 24.) In the book of *Leviticus* the thing was pictured, *prefigured*. Look at chapter xvi., and see what a picture that chapter gives us: (verses 5-7) all presented before the Lord, a picture of Christ, in order that poor sinners might be free; (verse 8) the two goats, both representing Christ, the one representing the *fact* of His death and what was done with His blood, the other representing the *consequence* of His death and what was done with our sins. (Verse 9.) There is the Lord in picture presented as a sin-offering for the sin of sinners, forfeiting His own life for those who had forfeited their lives before the tribunal of the Great God. (Verse 10.) The scape-goat here represents the effectuality of the atonement.

(Verses 11-19.) Mark, the burning incense was created by the fire which consumed the sacrifice; and thus the High Priest stands before the presence of God accepted for Israel, and then the trumpet sounds

throughout the land, the captives go free, the aliens go home, and all debts are paid.

Now turn to Heb. ix. 11-15, where the shadow has been superseded by the substance. The atonement in Israel was only for a year ; but Christ has done the better thing, and obtained *eternal redemption* for us. On the ground of having paid the penalty, and being the expiation for our sin, that atonement is *accepted*. And we are told, in Rom. iv. 25 : " He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification," and " therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God." His own self, having purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of God ; is not that acceptance ? When He came into the highest heaven as High Priest for His people, He presented His own forfeited life for acceptance ; and God said : " Sit Thou on my right hand." And the shout was heard : " Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in." Heaven's veil was drawn aside to admit Him ; and the word of God thus expresses His pleading there for us : " He ever liveth to make intercession for us." And who *witnesses* all this to us ? Our Lord Jesus is no sooner received within the veil than the Holy Ghost comes forth to be the witness, witnessing in the word of the truth of the Gospel ; witnessing in the Trinity ; and bearing witness with every child of God that he is a child of God, and being in him " a well of living water springing up into everlasting life."

And is not this atonement *proclaimed* ? What is

the Gospel but the proclamation that "the God of peace has brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant?" And "through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things," "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." (Gal. i. 4.) "Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our *Father*." There is the answer to all objections; if He is our Father, we may well *rest* satisfied.

Well, atonement has been made and accepted, justice is satisfied, the veil is rent, and of things that are spoken this is the sum: "*We have* such an High Priest, who has passed into the heavens."

In some minds the difficulty arises—is guilt transferable? *It is*, as we are clearly shown in Rom. v. 12. I am guilty for Adam's sin, and this is true of every soul that is born into the world. If guilt were not transferable, God would not be just in charging me with Adam's sin. I inherit salvation from Christ in the same way as I inherit guilt from Adam. I am born into Adam's family by generation, and I am born into God's family by regeneration. Generation identifies me with guilt; regeneration identifies me with righteousness. Union with Christ is on the ground of His having been in a position to take my place.

There is another objection which some put forth. Where is the necessity for this atonement? One drop of poison, dropped into the *perfect* man, Adam,

has deluged the world with corruption. *Sin is contrary to God.* What doth it do? It turns love into wrath, light into darkness, liberty into bondage, loyalty into enmity, blessing into curse, life into death, angels into devils, and heaven into hell.

Another objection. Why might not God have forgiven sin without atonement? We have the answer in the Garden of Gethsemane, when, with the terrible sweat drops on His brow, the Saviour said, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me;" and "He was heard, in that He feared," but the cup did not pass. Therefore it is written in those terrible sweat drops, and in the cup, "My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me;" that it would be incompatible with the character of a holy God if any sinner were ever admitted without full atonement being made. And the wonder of wonders is that God Himself should become in some inconceivable way the atonement! "His own self bear our sins in His own body on the tree."

Again, why was such a dreadful thing as the cross necessary? The Lord intended by it to teach us many lessons. Look at the cross of Christ, and you see, what?—that such iniquity could have been perpetrated by mortal man, the crowning achievement of devilry, the exhibition of what man was capable of. Was there ever such a *man* as Christ? and yet the cross was the downy bed that they provided for Him. And then on the cross we see an exhibition of God's indignation against sin; and we ought to know *that*, in order to appreciate God's *love* and *salvation*, the height, and depth, and length, and

breadth of that wondrous love which passeth knowledge.

And what is the end of that sacrifice on the cross? our *freedom*, our *justification*, our death to sin, the world crucified unto us, and we unto the world; life supplied, cleansing supplied, atonement supplied. "And they pierced His side, and forthwith there came out blood and water." "His own self bear our sins in His own body on the tree." Because God is holy, just, and true, and because God is love, God would make "Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." And how am I to get the benefit? What did the Israelite do? He brought his victim, and through the priest presented it to the Lord, and as it were said, "Take this life, this victim, slain for me, for my life," and the sinner went free. By faith, take the Lamb of God, whose blood cleanseth from all sin, and present it.

Christ's life for mine.

Christ's death for me.

Christ's salvation for me. And God has sworn that "as many as receive Him, to them gives He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

RECONCILIATION.

2 COR. V. 17-21. — "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

Our subject is Reconciliation. There is a close connection between the subjects we have been considering. Atonement is the fruit of substitution, and now the fruit of atonement is reconciliation. All reconciliation between the sinner and God is on the ground of atonement, and atonement is on the ground of substitution.

Reconciliation is a blessed word, and it speaks of a blessed thing. It means the renewal and restoration of friendship, love, and peace between estranged persons, and that on the ground of an entire, satisfactory, and absolute removal of all reasons of estrangement. This word reconciliation, and the fact of reconciliation, implies that originally there was a state of perfect accord and mutual friendship, love, and peace existing between God and man. God made man perfect, and no shadow lay between

unfallen man and God. But a cause of estrangement arose between God and man. Sin on *man's part* interfered, causing division, loss of fellowship and communion with God, and all the privileges with which man, as an unfallen creature, was endowed. Sin caused a mutual breach between God and man.

On *God's part*, the holiness of His character alienated Him from man. His justice, truth, will, law, commandments, and righteousness were all outraged by sin; for God is of purer eyes than to behold "iniquity," and cannot have fellowship with sin. The result was complete alienation. God was insulted, provoked, angered. Man was sinful, corrupt, condemned, hateful, "laying up wrath for himself against the day of wrath." Instead of being the child of God's love, man became the child of God's wrath, as St. Paul says: "Children of wrath, even as others."

The word here translated reconciliation means a complete and thorough change from one state to another. But in the case of a breach between God and man, *who* is to change? God cannot change, for "He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." There is no reason why He should change. God never can be reconciled to sin, *never*. Man was impotent to change. The word of God represents him as dead in trespasses and sins, utterly incapable of setting right the breach that sin had caused between himself and God, and, alas! alas! unwilling to set it right, even if he had the power. We have no power, nor have we the will. The carnal mind is not only the enemy of God, but is *enmity to God*, and cannot be reconciled.

How, then, reconciliation was to be effected was the great problem that only God Himself could solve? But the wondrous revelation is made to us, "that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;" that Christ came here, making reconciliation for iniquity, bringing in everlasting righteousness; and the consequence of this work is, that He has opened out the way for God's favour and love to flow down on guilty sinners who receive the reconciliation. We nowhere read in the Bible that God reconciles Himself to man; there is no such thing stated in the Bible. We read of God reconciling man to Himself, but not Himself to man. Out of the pure love of His own nature He provided the reconciliation, and it was effected by the way of substitution and atonement. "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Then, as those that are *in Him*, we are justified from all things by reason of our union with Him, and reconciliation follows. We have this matter clearly illustrated for us in Matt. v. 23, 24: "First be reconciled to thy brother," &c. Put away that which is contrary to thy brother. This was the state of things when the God of all grace was pleased, "while we were yet sinners," to put away that from us which caused alienation from Him. And look also at Rom. v. 10: "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God"—not God reconciled to us; it was completely God's act reconciling to Himself those that at the time were in actual enmity—"if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by *the*

death of His Son”—not by anything we did—“much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” And in that righteousness God receives us, pardons us, and reconciliation follows. In Eph. ii. 16, we read how this is done, “that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having *slain the enmity* thereby.” That is the way God reconciles the poor sinner to Himself; He has *slain* the enmity, not softened it or cured it; nay, He *slew it*, laid it on the head of Christ, made Christ’s soul an offering for the enmity.

Look again at Col. i. 16-19. First we are told there who He was. There is not a saint in heaven that has not been reconciled to God on this ground; and the elect angels are preserved in their position by virtue of the same. “And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things to Himself,” not reconcile Himself to all things. God is the *reconciler*, not the *reconciled* (verses 20-21). And then the result, “to present you unblameable and irreproachable in His sight,” &c. (verses 22-23). Oh! receive the reconciliation, God’s gift. It has been effected. Plead it, believe it, shelter in it; draw near to God by the new and living way which He has opened up for us through His blood. None will be refused, all are welcome, for “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and not imputing unto them their sins.” God in Christ reconciling the sinner to himself; the believing sinner also in Christ reconciled to God. *Christ* is the meeting-place; God the provider; Christ is the reconciler. The sinner believing is in Christ, and thus in Christ is

reconciled to God. What a change takes place in a man when he believes in Christ. He receives the reconciliation ; he is in Christ, a member of His body, His flesh, His bones ; a member of the only begotten Son of God : he is a new creature. There is no stain on him now, no ground of separation between him and God now. Old things are passed away. He stands complete in Christ ; no charge can ever now be laid against him. God reconciles the man to Himself, not imputing unto him his sins. All things are become new. A new life, the life of God ; a new birth, born into God's family ; a new root of excellency, the Christ of God. Christ is made unto him who is of God in Christ wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. A new man, a new righteousness, a new standing, a new inheritance, a new hope, a new home. How could God be other than reconciled to the man who is in Christ Jesus. God's message to us is, sin has been put away ; God's anger has been put away, has been executed on the Substitute, Christ. He has cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" that God might never refuse any poor sinner that comes to God in His name. There is no wrath of God now against any poor sinner that comes in Christ. We never read of God being in a hurry, except when He *ran* to meet the returning prodigal.

For He hath made Him to be sin for us," &c. This is God's message to us ; and the Holy Ghost has come down from heaven to proclaim it ; and the moment we come to God thus, all veils are removed, all disagreements put away. And oh ! the joy and peace

that flows in ! what confidence in God follows, what love to God, what holy worship, when a man believes in this effected reconciliation. It is as perfect as God can make it perfect, as complete, as absolute as God can make it, and as gracious as God is gracious. There is no reservation in God's mind ; no shadow remains in God's heart. (Verses 19-21.) Nothing but unbelief hinders us from coming. Oh ! come to Him ; it is the absolute removal of all sin, justification from all things, redemption from all iniquity, atonement made for all transgression. God has reconciled lost, guilty man to Himself through the atoning work of His own dear Son, and it is proclaimed by the Holy Ghost to us. And then He calls us to a feast through reconciliation. Wherever we have *reconciliation* mentioned in the Bible *over sacrifice*, we have a *feast* following. For instance, look at Gen. xxvi. 28-30, also chapter xxxi. 53, 54, the feast following reconciliation founded on sacrifice, covenant. (Ex. xxiv. 6-11 ; xxxiv. 14, 15.) And the comment of the Apostle Paul on this we have in 1 Cor. x. 16, 17 : the *feast of reconciliation*. Christ has left it behind Him. (Matt. xxvi. 26-28.) Having made the reconciliation, He would have us feast with Him : "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me, that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom." "Called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." So you see the feast ever follows reconciliation.

When a man receives these things, what a marvellous change it produces in him. Look at Saul of Tarsus. Suddenly the Reconciler called to him : "Saul,

Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" And when God revealed to him pardon, life, and welcome, how that man's soul burnt with zeal for Him. And then we read of his going forth saying: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ." God is the Reconciler, the revealer of it. And God's grace gives us His Spirit, that we may receive it; and the effect is a complete change in the heart towards God. *Now* we can say: "*Our* Father, who art in heaven," can draw nigh with the Spirit of adoption to His very bosom. His word is now our delight. His will we wish to be ours, and fear to have any will apart from it. His Christ is ours. His friendship and the glory of His salvation is that which we love to boast and sing of. Oh! accept the gift of God, the Great Reconciler, Jesus Christ! And may the language of our hearts ever be: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross, of the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

FAITH.

ST. JOHN I. 12, 13.—“But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name : which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Faith is a familiar expression, and to believe in God a very common religious profession ; and yet there are few matters about which greater confusion of thought exists. *Every* professing Christian says, “I believe in God.” “I believe in Jesus Christ.” “Of course I do ; I am not *an infidel*.” And yet few comparatively seem to know what is meant in Scripture by believing on Jesus Christ, or, indeed, what it is we are commanded and warranted to believe ; in other words, wherein saving faith consists.

Let us first notice some common mistakes on this subject.

Faith is not the conviction that we possess a certain creed, however true that creed may be. Faith is not a confident persuasion of our personal interest in Christ. Faith is not an assured certainty of our own salvation when we die. Faith is not a conscious realization of our having passed from death into life. Faith is not a firm belief that we do, in fact, believe.

Faith in God terminates in God ; but *these* are all subjective, and centre and revolve about self—What I am ;—what I feel ;—what I possess. Now, nothing

we can discern in ourselves or with reference to our own attainments, in *grace* or otherwise, can possibly be a satisfactory object of or subject of divine faith. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked;" and feelings change and frames of mind are various. Verily, there is no greater or more common mistake among professing Christians than to puzzle themselves with the questions, "Have I faith?" "Have I the right sort of faith?" Thus, without intending it, they substitute faith for Christ, and right faith for the right object. The right faith is to believe the right thing—like Abraham, who, when God had made him a promise, "considered not" . . . and therefore "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; being fully persuaded that what God had promised He was able to perform." "And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 19-22.); imputed, not for any righteousness in his faith, but because his faith repudiated all self-righteousness.

What then is faith of the operation of God, and wherein does it consist? Faith is a personal, and authorized confidence in a personal Saviour, and an individual reliance on that Saviour, for all that He is declared by God in Scripture, or declares Himself to be.

1. It is personal for one's own self.

2. It is authorized, *i.e.*, warranted by His promises, else faith would be presumptuous or foolish in the extreme. Now, the testimony God has given us concerning His Son is, that He has given Him, and eternal life in Him, and that "by Him all who believe

in Him are justified from all things ;" that " as many as received Him, to them God gives power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name," who is " made of God unto them wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." And as Christ was freely given to them, so all that believe are given to Him to be *in* Him, *with* Him, *like* Him, and *for* Him for ever and ever.

3. Moreover, faith means a continuous act of reliance on Christ. The latest Greek revision evidences this. The tense here used is the present subjunctive, the force of which is not only we did believe, or we intend to believe, but we do believe and continue believing. (Compare John viii. 31.) Faith believes in Jesus Christ for what He is revealed to be, and for all God has given Him to be, viz., *a Saviour*, almighty to save, a Teacher at whose feet we must sit, a Master whose commands we must obey. Alas ! many are willing enough to have Christ for a Saviour from hell, but not so for a Teacher, and not so for a Master ; true faith receives Him for all in all. Our text says, " as many as received *Him*." It is a beautiful definition of divine faith,—*"receiving Him."* (Compare John v. 43 with John xii. 44 and Col. ii. 6, 7.)

Faith in Christ is, more literally, faith unto Christ ; it is coming unto Him, looking unto Him, cleaving unto Him, surrender of self unto Him, hoping in Him, waiting for Him, trusting on Him, abiding in Him, going for everything to Him as our "all in all." (See John ii. 24. "Jesus did not commit Himself unto them." The Greek is, did not believe them. Con-

trast 2 Tim. i. 12.) All true faith in God is founded in the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, and "they that know His name will put their trust in Him."

This divine knowledge is the gift of the Spirit of God; therefore, we find the constant prayer of both Old Testament and New Testament Saints to be, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things in Thy law;" and the Apostle's prayer, "That the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened." Again, as divine faith is founded in the knowledge of God and by the Spirit of God, so it comes by hearing the word of God, and is according to the word of God, and according to the Spirit of God. Faith is the root grace of all our practical Christianity; all other graces are the fruits of faith. Conviction, conversion, repentance, love, hope, patience, righteousness, joy, peace, humility, are all contained in faith, as the bloom is in the seed, and all things are possible to him that believeth. Salvation is by faith.

We are born into the family of God by faith in Christ Jesus. We live, are nourished, stand, walk, fight, overcome, by faith. We are justified by faith, sanctified by faith, have "access by faith to this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Faith is the uniting grace, (John xvii. 20,) the working grace, working by love. Faith is the assuring grace. (1 John v. 13.) In believing on Him whom He hath sent, we work the works of God; and this is the *work* of God, when we believe. (John vi. 28, 29.) But devils believe! (James ii. 19.) Yes, verily, and they believe the truth, and truly, and they

therefore tremble. Finally, faith is the resurrection-life begun. The same divine "power which wrought in Christ when God raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand," is His manifested and communicated power to us-ward who believe, for it raised us up together with Him and in Him. And the same power is acting in us, day by day, as we live the life we live in the flesh "by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us." And the same power shall be consummated in us in the glory by-and-bye, when, beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, we shall be "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." For He who prayed that all believers on Him should be one with Him, "even as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee," also prayed that they should behold His glory. Even David, by the Spirit of God, anticipated this unspeakable rest—"As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness, and I shall be satisfied when I awake up after Thy likeness."

REGENERATION.

JAS. I. 18.—“Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.”

Our subject is the New Birth. I shall at once enter on it, its necessity—its nature—how it is wrought in the soul—how I may know if I have been born again.

1. The necessity of a new birth arises from the hopeless and helpless state into which sin has plunged the whole human race. Man is fallen from the position of dignity and honour in which God his Creator placed him. Every faculty of the soul of man has become corrupted, defiled, poisoned, and slain by sin: “Out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts,” &c., &c. (Mark vii. 21.) And “It is written, there is none that doeth good, no, not one; they are all gone out of the way,” &c., &c., &c. (See Rom. iii. 10.) The ruin is complete; the plague is universal. Body, soul, and spirit are dead because of sin. The heart of man, from whence come the issues of life, contains all that is comprehended in the nature of sin—spiritual darkness, alienation, ignorance, enmity, corruption, death. We are by nature “twice dead, plucked up by the roots,” dead in spirit, and dead by law, condemned, sentenced, and awaiting execution; and if this be so, need we wonder that it is written, “They that are in the flesh cannot please God;” or again, “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom

of God ; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." Men, by nature spiritually blind, and deaf, and dead, cannot see, and hear, and enter into or live in glory. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Now let us observe carefully that these words of our blessed Lord were addressed to no ordinary individual. Nicodemus was a ruler in Israel, a Pharisee (one of the strictest sects of the Jewish religion), an enquirer, and, in fact, a pious man. Nicodemus was no immoral sensualist, but a rare example of human character, and the fact that the necessity of being born again existed in *his* case proves the necessity to be universal, individual, and absolute. "Marvel not that I said unto you, Ye must be born again,"—that is, born from above ! born anew ! No mere change, but a *new nature* is intended ; no mere improvement or reformation, but a *new birth* ! Cultivation will not suffice ; not a mended material, but a *new creation* must be produced.

2. What is this new birth ? It is the infusion of spiritual life, the life of God Himself, into the soul of a man. (Gal. ii. 20 ; 1 John v. 11.) And as this new life comes *from* God, so it enables a man to live *unto* God, by quickening his spiritual faculties, illuminating his understanding, and causing him, as a living soul, to perform spiritual actions. (Rev. xiv. 7, 8.)

Observe again, it is a *birth*, and a new birth, the nature thus begotten in the soul having had no previous existence in the man. This "seed of God" is sometimes called "a new creature," "the inner man," "the hidden man of the heart," "the new

man," "a new creation;" and it is distinctly contrasted with all that is in a man by nature. (See John i. 13.)

3. We next enquire how it is wrought. It is "of God," from first to last of God, viz, born of God, taught of God, kept by His power, sanctified for Himself. First, God sends the *life* of His Son into a man's soul, and then the *spirit* of His Son into his heart, formerly dead in his trespasses and sins, making the man alive unto God. (See Ephesians ii. 1-3; 1 Cor. ii. 14.) Christ is the source of his new life: "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." "The eternal life which was with the Father has been manifested unto us." (1 John i.) "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us"—a new root of a new humanity,—and "His life was laid down, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death." The *womb* of this new birth is the travail of *His* soul. The *laver* of this regeneration is the fountain opened in His blood. (Titus iii. 3.) The *agent* is the Holy Ghost, "born of the Spirit." "The *seed* is the word of God," "the engrafted word." (1 Peter i. 2, and Jas. i. 18.) The *charter* and *power* of our new birthright is the resurrection of Christ our head. "Begotten again to a living hope." (1 Peter i. 3.) The receptive and apprehending agent is "faith of the operation of God." For it is written, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe on His name*: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i. 12, 13.) Naturally, we were united to the first

Adam by creation ; we are his children by generation, and we inherit his ruin as being descended from him. Spiritually and by grace, all who believe on Jesus Christ are united to Him by eternal election, and become His children by *regeneration*, inheriting in Him and with Him His "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." We are "quickened together, raised up together, and seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 5, 6.) Baptism is the sign, token, and pledge of this ; the thing signified is the power of the Holy Ghost uniting us to our Lord Jesus Christ, that we may thus become both buried with Him and risen again with Him, and in Him "accepted in the Beloved."

4. How may I know if I am indeed born again ? Because God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into my heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. How do I know I have *natural* birth ? Because I am possessed of certain faculties, tastes, desires, affections, hopes, fears, born with me, and developed in association with natural surroundings. Even so, I know I have a spiritual birth ; for I possess *new* faculties, tastes, desires, affections, hopes, and fears, *new-born* in my soul, and being developed day by day in association with the word of God. When a man is born anew, born again, born of God, Christ becomes the object, joy, hope, love, and desire of his heart ; and when this is so, *it is a new heart*.

Regeneration is an instantaneous act of *grace*. There is no period in a man's life when he is neither spiritually *dead* nor spiritually alive ; and as regene-

ration is instantaneous, so it is also complete and perfect in degree. There is no such state as *partly* regenerated. Regeneration is immutable; the life is life eternal. Regeneration is *once for all*; no need to repeat it. Regeneration is divine and spiritual. Regeneration is our meetness for heaven, even as the blood and resurrection of Christ is our title.

The mind is the subject of this regeneration; the flesh is not regenerated; it still remains the flesh, even in the regenerate, and all that is born of the flesh *is flesh*. First, a man is renewed in the spirit of his mind, and then the Spirit of life makes His abode there. The Holy Spirit regenerates by *the word of God* before indwelling. He builds His house before occupying it; He constructs His temple before taking His place there. First, God sends the life of His Son, and then the spirit of His Son; that is God's order. (Gal. iv. 6.) Adoption gives us the name and title, regeneration the nature and meetness of sonship, and the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost gives us earnest and seal of our inheritance: "A well of water within the heart, springing up into everlasting life." The new man, born of God, is all eye for Christ, all ear for Christ, all heart for Christ, all hand for Christ, all feet to follow Him, and all voice to praise Him.

CONVERSION.

ST. MATT. XVIII. 1-6.—“ At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in My name receiveth Me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

Our subject last Thursday was Regeneration, the new birth. “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven.” (John iii. 3.) And here it is: “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Now we have another subject—*Conversion*. There are two things necessary for entrance into the kingdom of heaven—a *new birth* and *conversion*. He who knows all about the kingdom of heaven, and about us, is He who has taught us this. Regeneration is the root of conversion, and conversion is the fruit of regeneration; they cannot be separated. The man who is born again will be a converted man, and the man who is converted has been born again. The new life that we receive at regeneration acts in the man, and this is conversion. Conversion means a

complete total change of the mind, will, affections, desires, aims, character, and conduct. Have you been thus changed? There is a great deal of talk about it; but have *we* been subjects of this great change?

We have seen that regeneration means the infusing of a new and divine nature into the soul, a new life and a new nature that has never been there before. When a child is born of parents, it receives the nature of the parents; and when a soul is born of God, it receives the nature of God—a life of grace. Oh! such grace! a life of truth, a life of holiness, a life of love; and the Spirit of Christ from God imparts new light to the understanding which before was dark; new inclinations to the will which before was alienated; new affections to the heart which before was hard and opposed to God; and a new power into the life. Ezekiel describes conversion thus: "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." And the Spirit of God (in Isa. lv.) describes it as turning from our own thoughts and ways to God's thoughts and ways; this is conversion. Has this change taken place in me? Without it we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven; and we would be only a blot there, if we could enter.

This divine power of God, operating in the soul, infusing new life into the soul, and converting the soul into a new course of life, is not inferior to the power wrought in Christ when God raised Him from the dead; so the Spirit of God tells us in Eph. i. 19;

that is the power that works conversion in the soul. And what a conversion it must be which requires the power that has overcome death and hell to accomplish it! Every converted man is the workmanship of God. (Eph. ii. 10.) All the workmanship of God is very splendid. Oh! the power and glory manifested in them in the universe around us, and the starry firmament over us; but the workmanship of God on the poor sinner's soul is far greater than the power that created the universe. Wait, wait, till by-and-bye, and then you will see the wonderful workmanship God wrought in us by putting Christ into us. When a man is truly converted to God, a complete change takes place in his frame, his temper, and his thoughts with regard to himself; how differently he thinks of himself after he has been converted to God! What self-loathing there is! And his thoughts about the kingdom of God are very different to what they used to be; there is a complete revolution. How the Apostles astonish one here by their ignorance, but what a patient Teacher they had! They were slow to arrive at a just notion of truth, and they come and propose a question, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" They had been preaching the kingdom of heaven, and they had heard Christ preach it, and John the Baptist preach it; but how little they seemed to know about it, after all. So the Lord proceeds to teach them first by a sign, and then a sermon.

"He called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them." When they said, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" they meant the greatest in *name*. Is it John, or Peter, or James, or

who else? And it was hard to get this out of their head. It was the same when the sons of Zebedee came to Him (Mark x. 35-40); it never seemed to enter their thoughts at all that it is *character*, not name, that gives man a place in the kingdom of heaven. (Verses 2, 3.) What a new idea that must have been to them! They were proud of their gifts and their labours, and they would look down on a little child being set up as an example to them. What, come down to be like it! Ah! the converted man becomes as a little child, with this difference, that he knows he is a little child; he knows it intelligently. What is a little child? the most helpless thing possible, but it does not know it; but we know it. It is wealthy, very wealthy, and its wealth is the love of its father and its mother; it is wealthy in love, and wealthy in care; for its parents take great care of it, its very helplessness is its strength, its need is its supply, its delicacy its security. And what the Lord meant is: "You talk about being great, but I tell you you must be *helpless* in your own estimation, poor and needy, and you will then find your wealth in your Father's love." The little child has no great thoughts, no high thoughts, no proud thoughts; it does not behave itself unseemly, exercises itself not in high matters; the parents' arms and the parents' bosom are the matters with which the little child is conversant. And if it could speak its need, what would that little child say? "*Wash me*, for I cannot wash myself, *clothe me, feed me*"—it cannot provide food or clothing—"and then *carry me*." It is a beautiful sign the Lord here gives us, to show what conversion is. Is the language of your

heart, "Lord, make me a little child; clothe me, wash me, feed me, carry me"? He calls His believing ones "*His little ones*," in Matt. x. 42; and so it is here (verse 4).

The man who lives most on the wealth of Christ's love, leans most on the bosom of Christ's tenderness, and comes helplessly to Him to be washed, fed, clothed, and carried, is the man who has entered most into the privileges of the kingdom.

"Whoso receiveth one such little child in **My** name, receiveth Me. And whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." The little child is safe in the parents' love, as well as provided for in the parents' love. He who was one of the greatest examples given us of conversion has left us a description of it; the *Apostle Paul*. (Acts xxvi.) He was sent by the Lord to be the means of converting others, having himself been the subject of conversion; and he tells us (verse 18) he was sent "to open their eyes." When a man's eyes are open, it supposes life, and he sees things as they are; and when his eyes are opened, what follows? "To turn them from darkness to light"—Have you been thus turned? That is a great change, it is conversion—and "from the power of Satan unto God." Have you been delivered from the power of Satan unto God, and been translated from darkness to light? People who are converted "were sometimes darkness, but now they are light in the Lord," and they know it. And what is the result? The inheritance among them that are

sanctified becomes ours; but except a man be converted, he cannot enter into these things.

See in the word of God conversion is mentioned in two aspects.

1. When a man is taken out of darkness; but he is only as a little child, and does not know what he has been taken out of.

2. When he learns day by day more and more; he makes mistakes, and each deliverance from his mistakes makes his conversion. As when our Lord said to Peter, "Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art *converted*, strengthen thy brethren." Here, therefore, we have conversion in a sense in which day by day, in the experience of the Christian, it is continually going on, being converted, from sin and self and Satan, to the knowledge of Jesus, His love, His light, His kingdom.

The necessity for this conversion is *absolute* (verse 3): "*Except* ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." This ought to be a most solemn matter with us. So long as we are unconverted, we are by practice and by nature at a distance from God. Your sins may not be of a vile or gross nature; but what matters what nature they are of, if you are separate from God, if you live at a distance from Him? and the world and the devil give plenty to attract and keep man at a distance from God. The unconverted man suffers at a distance from God, and day by day he gets further from Him. We are day by day each of

us going either further and further from Him, or else drawing nearer and nearer to Him. His messengers tell you of a royal feast, ready and prepared, and you begin to make excuse, until "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines into your heart." And then what a change! The Lord has been at pains to teach us of the mighty power of God that operates on the soul in conversion. Look at man unfallen in Eden. *His root was in himself*, therefore he fell; the risen power of Christ was not in him. Then the Lord deals with man as fallen, and gave man His law. He chose one family out of all the earth to communicate Himself to; and He sent prophet after prophet, and messenger after messenger, but they stoned them; till Christ Himself came, and Him they crucified. And then *grace* came to deal with man. In Matt. xiii., we are taught about the Lord's dealings in grace. There we have the blessed seed of Gospel truth sown on *the rock*; and what came of it? It withers away. Then the cultivation of human nature is described as seed sown in *stony places*; and what comes of it? It is wasted. And then the discipline of human nature is described as the *thorny ground*; and no good comes of the seed sown there. Nothing good comes till there is a new creation. A good heart, good ground, and then the seed sown there brings forth fruit an hundredfold. But that new heart is not native to any of us, it must be produced; and how does the Lord bring us to that point? (Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, 31, 32.) No amount of privileges will do. Men have listened to the Gospel all their days, and gone to hell at the end. It is a *new*

heart we want, and the preaching of the Gospel is the means whereby God doth create a new heart. (Psa xix. 7-8.) The Spirit of God is the *agent*, and the word of God is the *instrument*, by which conversion is brought about. (John v. 25.) Every soul that is converted has heard the voice of the Son of God and received the life of Christ. Have *you* been converted? Change of creed or reformation of conduct is not conversion. (Luke xi. 24-26.) Conversion is the turning of the devil *out* and the coming of Christ *into* the soul. The world *out* and Christ *in* is conversion. In conversion everything is new : "Men turning from idols to serve the living and true God, and waiting for His Son from heaven." (1 Thess. i. 10.)

REPENTANCE.

ZECH. XII. 10-14.—“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications : and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart ; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart ; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart ; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart ; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart ; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.”

“They shall look upon *Me* whom they have pierced,” and Jehovah undoubtedly was the Speaker. In another Scripture (St. John xix. 37), we read : “They shall look on Him whom they have pierced.” What a flash of light breaks in on the mind, as we compare the prophecy and the quotation. Oh ! brethren, who can measure the truth, or describe the fact that Jehovah was pierced for our sins ?

I believe the Spirit would not have us dwell so much on the crown of thorns, or the soldier's spear, as *the inward travail of His soul*. The outward suffering was only what He had in common with all His martyred people ; but the hiding of His Father's face, the inward suffering, enduring the curse we deserved, suffering *whatever* was due to sin, so that not one drop of wrath remained, or one angry look for any poor sinner who comes unto God by Him—

this was the travail of His soul. Perhaps in eternity, by-and-bye, when we shall know even as we are known, we shall understand what was meant when He said, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" but we cannot understand now the depth of those sufferings.

I would like to-day to make a practical subject of the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and I would speak of what *true repentance* means. We sing about mourning for sin; but what do we know about it? There are many who talk much about communion with God, and yet who are not heart-broken because of sin. Many argue about election, and speak eloquently and think eloquently about what God's salvation is, but are not heart-broken because of sin. But if we want to have our hearts broken for sin, we must get it at the cross of Jesus; it is an *intelligent look at a suffering Saviour* that gives it.

"I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him." Now, undoubtedly, the primary reference in this prophecy is to the time when the nation of Israel, who crucified the Lord Jesus Christ, shall have the veil taken away, and chapter liii. of Isaiah shall be their mourning words: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities;" and there shall be that universal mourning in the land—spoken of in our text—flowing from a recognized knowledge of Him, "whom they have pierced." It is not the piercing of the Roman soldiers that is meant here, but each of us piercing Him. We must recog-

nize here our individual part in this awful transaction. "The land shall mourn, *every family apart.*" Observe the *universality* of the mourning—"the family of the house of David apart," the Royal family; "the family of the house of Nathan apart," the prophets; "the family of the house of Levi apart," the priests; "the family of the house of Shimei apart," the Scribes.

Mark the *intensity* of the mourning; the bitterness of it is compared to "when one mourneth for his first-born," the bitterest of all sorrows. There is a *reality* here. May the Lord keep us from the sentimental profession of sorrow for Him who was wounded for us. May He keep us from a sentimental confession of the fact that we are sinners. There is no more dark delusion than that that makes people substitute sentimentality for religion.

And then mark here the *individuality* of this mourning—"every family apart, and their wives apart." We are taught first here what true repentance means. There is nothing that is more *mistaken* or more *misplaced* than what we call repentance. Repentance is not merely *conviction* or *sorrow* for sin. You may have both without having true repentance. The repentance is the complete change of mind and conduct in regard to *God*, in regard to *ourselves*, and in regard to *others*. And where there is not this complete change, this turning round with regard to God, to ourselves, and to others, there is no real Gospel repentance. Our ignorance with regard to God needs correction, our unbelief of God needs to cease, and our enmity to God needs to be overcome. And with regard to ourselves, we say sometimes that

“we are rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that we are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,” and this, repentance with regard to ourselves teaches us. And then with regard to others, naturally, how selfish we are and careless about the salvation of others. If we have tasted life and pardon ourselves, we shall long to see others enjoy it too; but if there is no yearning after the souls of those around us, where is our repentance? Wherever there is true repentance, the thoughts, desires, affections, aims, all change, old things pass away, and all things become new. Is it so with you? God forbid that we should ever say, “Peace, peace, when there is no peace.” And as in true repentance, all this change takes place, so the course of life changes too. There is a mistake sometimes about that which is called true repentance. Conviction of sin is not true repentance, not what God calls repentance when He says, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.” Repentance is always according to the character of the motive which produces it. We read of very many cases of repentance in the Bible that were not the repentance not to be repented of. Pharaoh said, “I have sinned.” But why? What was his motive? The judgments of God pressed him down. What else could he do or say? You remember Balaam. He, too, said, “I have sinned.” But what was his motive? What extorted the confession? Was it *grace*? No; he still loved the wages of sin. Remember Achan. When the Babylonish garment was discovered with him, he said, “I have sinned.” Was *grace* his motive?

No ; it was covetousness. Remember Saul. What was the root of his confession ? The loss of his kingdom. Judas ; alas ! alas ! his was the repentance of despair : " he went away and hanged himself."

All who are overtaken by the consequences of sin are ready enough to confess the fact. So, you see repentance that follows conviction of sin, so frequently alluded to in Scripture, is not true repentance. Pharoah's was the repentance of fear. Esau's was the repentance of selfishness. Saul's was the repentance of disappointment. Judas's was the repentance of remorse, despair. Contrast these with the repentance of " the man after God's own heart : " " Against *Thee*, *Thee only*, have I sinned." What lay at the root of that heart-felt repentance ? Deep sorrow for having sinned against God ; he was forgiven ; like the prodigal son, his father's arms round his neck broke his heart. Remember (Luke vii.) the woman at the feet of Jesus. What caused those tears ? He had forgiven her, therefore she loved much. Saul of Tarsus ; he was caught up to the third heavens, and he tells it but once, and that fourteen years after ; but three times he tells us of the scene and circumstances that wrought in him true repentance—his journey to Damascus, and how Jesus approached to him, saying, " Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me ? " And he said, " Who art Thou, Lord ? I am *Jesus* whom thou persecutest." And Saul said, " Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do ? " And the Apostle went forth with new thoughts, aims, desires. That is true repentance ; he had got a *look at Jesus*, and that had changed him altogether. Have you got a look at Jesus, an intelligent sight of the love of God as manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ ?

Repentance is also often *misplaced* in our creed, and spoken of as a sort of preliminary condition, a something to be done, before we can go on to rejoice in the Lord and walk in His ways. Now, when John the Baptist went forth preaching, what was his sermon? "*Repent*, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." What was the motive? The kingdom of heaven is come, the King is with you, love has overflowed, pardon is here, life is here, tenderness is here,—"*the kingdom of heaven is at hand*;" it hath approached to you. Oh! break off your old service, cast off your old trammels, and put on the yoke of mercy, love, and peace; that was true repentance. He begins with His love, and mercy, and tenderness, in order to break down the opposition He meets with. You remember the account the Lord gives us of the feast (Luke xiv. 15). All is ready; and the Master sends out to the highways and hedges to bring in the poor, the maimed, and the blind. Who begins? Is it the poor and blind who come and ask to be taken in? Nay; *the King of Glory provides the feast*, and *He* sends out to the unconsciously poor and blind to come in.

Again, look at Ezek. xvi. 5, 6, and then see the close of that chapter (verse 63), when they come to an intelligent knowledge of Him: "Be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." Ah! it is the *Lord* that seeks the poor naked soul, and the soul discovers that it is the Lord seeking it; and that knowledge gets possession of the heart, and the heart so possessed is repentance toward God.

So with the nations. In Matt. xxviii. 19, the Lord tells His disciples to "go and teach all nations," &c. ; tell them of the love of God ; the free salvation provided ; the home I am going to prepare for them ; the Spirit that shall come to turn them from darkness to light ; and that I shall soon come again to take them to Myself who shall believe on Me. Is it the world seeking after Christ? No ; it is Christ seeking after the world. Then you remember how Christ, during His earthly ministry, goes from city to city uninvited, and often, alas ! alas ! unwelcome. And so as with cities, as with nations, as with the Jews, so with *individuals*. Did Levi seek Jesus? No ; he was sitting at the receipt of custom, and Jesus *came to him* and said, "Follow me." Did Saul of Tarsus seek Jesus? Nay ; he was on his way to Damascus, with his heart filled with hate to Him and His people, when Jesus found him. And I now ask each of you here who have seen Jesus, *Who* went first? Did you seek or choose Him, or did He seek you? Sometimes in heavy trial or sickness the heart is broken. When the heart is whole and the home happy, you would not come ; and the love that gave Himself for you led Him to crush your spirit, that you might turn, in your weariness and loneliness and desolation, to Him who you knew was the only One who could comfort you. When true repentance comes, there is, first conviction of sin ; the Holy Ghost is the convictor, the instructor, and all is of the pure sovereign grace of God.

Now, mark the order of my text ; see whence the repentance comes and how it is produced. What is the first step? It is in heaven. *God* acts when there

is any true repentance in any soul. "*I will pour,*" &c. And God acts, oh! so bountifully. It is the out-flow of the Holy Ghost. Repentance is the return of the Holy Ghost to Him we have sinned against, bearing our poor broken hearts with Him. See it is: "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of *grace*." What is grace? Free love, telling you all is forgiven; the vision of Him "who was wounded for your transgressions, and bruised for your iniquities." It is no light thing in God to forgive sin, and no light thing for the sinner to be forgiven. There is not a sin forgiven except at the cost of the Lord Jesus Christ having been made a sacrifice. "I will pour upon the house of David . . . the spirit of *supplications*." No prayer of the sinners is recognized till he comes to Jesus. "The Spirit of supplication"—that is, the Holy Ghost; and they shall "look on Me whom they have pierced." Oh! who can describe that look? The only look at all like it was our Lord's look on Peter. Oh! this look! intelligence is in it; grief is in it; trust is in it; broken-hearted contrition is in it. That is repentance. "They shall look on Me whom they have pierced;" and then they shall mourn. You remember how repentance comes. We are told (in 2 Cor. vii. 10) "*godly* sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." May the Lord God Almighty open my eyes and yours intelligently to see it; and, for His own name's sake, fulfil in each one of us to-day the words of our text, "They shall mourn for Him as one *mourneth* for his only son."

SALVATION.

PSALM III. 8.—“Salvation belongeth unto the Lord : Thy blessing is upon Thy people.”

Our subject is Salvation ; and in this Psalm we have a very striking definition of it. Two expressions are used in the Psalm to tell us what salvation is. In the second verse, we read : “ Many there be which say of my soul, There is no *help* for him in God.” *Help* is the same word as is used in our text for *salvation* ; but “salvation’ belongeth unto the Lord ;” this is faith’s answer to the objection, the cavilling, the ungenerous assumption and assertion of the enemy of souls : “Salvation belongeth unto the Lord.” And then see the definition : “ *Thy blessing* upon Thy people,” not merely in the abstract, but is “*upon* Thy people.”

It is the *communication* of the blessing that constitutes salvation. It is no blessing to me to know that there is fulness in Him if it is not imparted to me. The salvation of God is the *imparted blessing* ; the salvation that does not save is not worth having ; the Saviour that does not deliver is no true Saviour ; but *our Saviour doth deliver*. In Num. vi. 22, we read : “ And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and his sons, saying, On this wise

ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee and keep thee"—that is salvation; "the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee"—that is salvation; "the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace"—that is salvation. But that is not all: "And they shall *put My name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.*" Not only the Lord wishing them good, but doing them good; not only proclaiming His name, but communicating His name to those He blesses. And so it is here. "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord: *Thy blessing is upon Thy people.*" Salvation is His blessing.

Now put the question each to your own souls—"Am I saved or unsaved? What do I know about this salvation?"

The salvation of God is an imparted blessing: it means many things. The descriptions of it in the word of God are wonderful. It is a *full* salvation, a *great* salvation; there is nothing wanting to it. As we read, in Heb. vii. 25, of our Blessed Lord, that "He is able to *save to the uttermost* those that come unto God by Him." This is the salvation we want. Brethren, be true to God's word and this blessed statement. What do you know about a salvation that saves to the uttermost? Anything short of that won't save you. I believe the salvation of God carries you out, out, out to the uttermost, to the very end; the same that took you out of darkness must bring you in the last step of the way to the palace of the King. It is a *full* salvation; and what makes it so is that it is so *free*. We have nothing to do to earn it, and

nothing to do in order to keep it. So *free*. Look at Isa. xii. 2-3 : "Behold, *God* is my salvation"—not any attribute of God, but all His attributes put together—God Himself, the possessor of all, is *my* salvation. Oh ! that little word "*my*." It makes all the difference when faith can apprehend it ; it is not salvation for me except it is *my* salvation. "Walk about Zion, and go round about her ; tell the towers thereof." But this is something more. Look at *God* : look at the length and breadth, and depth, and height of Almighty God ; that is *your* salvation. Is it any wonder that the prophet adds, "I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song : He also is become my salvation." Therefore "with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Oh ! such abundant flowing up, up, wells of living water, and faith drawing the living water with joy from the wells of salvation.

This salvation is also spoken of in the Bible as a *present* salvation ; not something to expect when we die. If we do not get it now, we shall not have it then. In 2 Tim. i. 9, we read : "He *hath* saved us, and called us with an holy calling." This is the salvation of God. Oh ! mix faith with this, put the thing to your own soul ; because, if you are God's child, you ought to be feasting on the blessed truths given in God's word. "He *hath* saved us," we read. Can we say "yes" to this ? There are many people who always seem to live in the mist about salvation. They don't take God at His word.

Observe again, it is said to be a *complete* salvation, as we read in St. Luke i. 69 : "God has raised up an

horn of salvation for us." The figure of the horn is threefold :—

1. It represents *strength*—a strong salvation. Who can resist the prowess of Him who undertook to save us from death and hell? If it were not strong, it could not sustain us. The world is strong—death is strong—*Jesus is stronger*.

2. It represents *honour* : "Lift not up your horn so high." The salvation of God is an *honourable* salvation. His people do not come in with knees shaking into the presence of angels and archangels, but they come in by royal invitation ; justice is satisfied, the law fulfilled.

3. It is the emblem of *plenty*. The horn full, flowing over ; an abundant salvation is the salvation of God. You remember how the "man after God's own heart" speaks of it on his dying-bed. He looks within and without, and finds no comfort ; and, seeing nothing like it in his own circle, he says, "Although my house be not so with God ; yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure : for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although He make it not to grow." (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.)

This salvation is also spoken of as an *everlasting* salvation : "Israel saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation." He does not put man into a position where one day he may be tempted to fall. No ; it is *secure* for ever and ever—"saved in the Lord with an *everlasting* salvation."

And in St. Jude we have a sweet word in verse 3, where it is spoken of as the "*common* salvation"—

which means that every child of God has a part in it. It is not only those who have great faith and great gifts that are partakers of this salvation, but it is common to all God's family. Some have more love, more faith, more joy, than others ; but this is common to all. Every child of God is saved, one as much as another. Every child of God is born into God's family, and is an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ, one as much as another. But some are only babes in the apprehension of this ; and therefore the Apostle gives us three classes—*babes, young men, and fathers*. We ought to be living more in the joy, the power, and the fulness of this salvation. This is the salvation set before us—*God's blessing*. And is there not something progressive in it? Yes ; we have but the foretaste of it in reality. The first foretaste of salvation is when a man believes on the Lord Jesus Christ : "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The moment he receives Christ, he receives salvation. I know not what will be the consummation. We must let in eternity before we can contemplate or comprehend all that is contained in salvation. *God* is contained in it ! Every day I live, salvation is operating *in* me and *on* me ; "renewed day by day," every new lesson of divine love, every new apprehension given us by the grace of God, is salvation-work. But, by-and-bye, when I get rid of this mass of corruption, my body, then I shall be learning what I could not learn here ; and finally, when the trumpet sounds, and I shall get back my body, "made like unto His glorious body," and every foe shall be put down, and God shall become all in all ;

then we shall go out into our inheritance, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, "Now is come salvation," &c. But we must have salvation before we can understand what it comprehends. "Thy blessing is upon Thy people." "To you is the word of this salvation sent:" and the reception it meets with divides all mankind into two classes:—

1. Those who receive it.
2. Those who neglect it.

"What shall we do, if we neglect so great salvation?"

This salvation comes to us by faith, and "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;" and faith brings first the joy, and then the strength of our salvation, God Himself—the tower, the rock of our salvation—a splendid structure! All the wisdom and power of God is put forth in the manifestation, the achieving, the devising of it. And who can tell what it cost Him?

This salvation includes seven things.

1. *Absolute and entire forgiveness.* If you are not forgiven you are not saved.
2. *Absolute and everlasting protection.* There is no salvation if there is not protection.
3. *Adoption.* God would have you one of His family.
4. *Union.* United to Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ; as He says, "I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one;" members of His body, part of Himself.
5. "If children, then *heirs.*" That is the thought which suggests to us the impossibility of describing

the ultimate purpose of God in the salvation of His people.

6. "Heirs of God, and *joint heirs with Christ.*" Can you take that in? I cannot. Where He goes, I go; where He ascends, I mount; what He possesses, I enjoy; whatever power He exercises, I am a joint heir with Him. This is salvation!

7. Salvation is the fruition of all the promises that ever God made; all are Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus. Christ is the salvation of God, and the Giver of salvation to us poor sinners. Are you saved, or are you unsaved? Some say, "I *hope* so." That is no answer to make; it is a cold reply to all His sweet promises.

See, what has He saved you *from*? *Death*, otherwise you are not saved at all; the *curse, alienation, sin, judgment, Satan, darkness, unbelief*; from "your *vain conversation* received by tradition from your fathers."

And then see what He has saved you *to*! Saved unto *life eternal*; to the *adoption of sons*; "to an *inheritance* incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," to *glory, honour, and immortality*.

The salvation of God is a *reality*. He *has* saved you (if you believe in Him) *from* all these things and *to* all these things, and much more than ever entered into the heart of man to conceive. Don't be satisfied with calling God your Saviour, without giving Him credit for being your Saviour. Don't call Him your Salvation, your Redeemer, without giving Him credit

for being your Salvation, your Redeemer. Do not mock Him by calling Him Friend, without giving Him credit for being your Friend.

The subject is too large : it is a blessed subject ! The first place where the word salvation occurs in the Old Testament is at the deathbed of Jacob. Poor Jacob ! Splendid promises had been made to him, and we look at his history, and find fault with it. He was a very weak man ; but when He was dying the promises of God seem all to shine round about him. His children were gathered round him, and a vision of the glory of the future was revealed to him, secured to Him in the covenant of Him who was pleased to call Himself the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob ; and he says, in the midst of blessing his sons, and as taking breath for a moment, " I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord." (Gen. xlix. 18.) Like fragrance to his senses was the thought of that salvation, like melody from heaven.

And then again, in Exodus xiv., we have a picture of this salvation. Israel brought out of Egypt under the guidance of the pillar-cloud, under the protection of the blood. They were in a fix, Pi-hahiroth on one side of them, and Migdol on the other, the sea in front, and their enemies behind them ; they seemed hedged in on every side, and were in fear and terror, and Moses comes to declare the will of God to them : " Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord ;" and then the way was made for them through the water, destruction for their foes, and a safe pathway on dry ground for them over to the other side. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel : " I will sing unto

the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously ; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation."

And this song we, too, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, shall sing one day under happier circumstances.

HOPE.

PSALM XLII. 11.—“Hope thou in God.”

Let us examine the subject of *Divine Hope*. Hope, like faith, is fixed on God ; and hope, like faith, is founded on God's promises. There is no reason for faith but on the ground of God's promises ; and there is no matter for hope but in the truth of God's promises.

Hope is made up of *trust, desire, expectation*. What a sweet thing it is to have trust in God, to have the desire of our soul toward God, and to have all our expectation from God : that is hope.

There is this difference between faith and hope : that *faith* regards God's promises as faithful and true ; *hope* regards them as most desirable and excellent. We may believe that which we do not value, but we cannot hope for it. *Faith* deals with the present—“the life we live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God.” We need faith for present conflict, as a shield amid present struggles. Faith stands on promises possessed ; but *hope* has to do with the future, it looks out at that which is to come.

Faith and hope are alike in another matter. Faith is distinguished from fruition, for when it has got possession of the thing promised, faith in the promise ceases, because it has got it. So hope is distinguished

from enjoyment, realization : "What a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" There is a common expression among Christians, "I wish I could realize these things more ; I believe, I hope, but I do not realize them." Just in proportion as you do realize them, you are living without faith or hope. When realization begins, hope ceases, faith is over. Do not think about realization. Remember "*faith* is the substance of things hoped for ;" and *hope* is the substance of things not seen, not realized. The Christian's hope is according to the Christian's faith. We cannot have more hope than faith : hope is founded on faith. If we apprehend by faith that God is able to do exceeding abundantly above what we can either ask or think, we anticipate, by hope, the fruition of all these things that faith tells us God is able to do for us.

What is this *divine hope* ? A firm persuasion and expectation of our personal interest in the promises and goodness of God, so far as they are for God's glory and our personal good. Look at Psalm xvii. (verse 15) and see what hope says : "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness." All that is in the distance ; and a beautiful prospect hope has when it stands on God's promises ; and thus it expatiates : "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness." There is no *if* about it : "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness."

Again, all this anticipation of hope is *assured* to us, *confirmed* and *secured* by the fact of our union with the Lord Jesus Christ ; He is our hope. If we have not got union in Christ, we have no real hope ; but if we have faith in Him, we have union with Him.

Hope in Christ is founded on His *grace, blood, righteousness*, and intercession for us evermore, and is sealed to us by God the Holy Ghost, who is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession; and it is revealed to us in God's word, that we may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost; and the Apostle prays: "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope."

The God of the believer is spoken of as "the God of hope," and the eternal life for which he is waiting is the promise of "God, who cannot lie." As Paul, in writing to Titus, says: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;" this life is in Christ, we have the hope of glory now, and if you have not got it, blame your *unbelief*. We have not the glory now, but "we are looking for that blessed *hope* and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Oh! into what a wondrous position divine hope places the soul.

See the *attitude* of hope in this Psalm before us; hope waiting upon God, watching, believing, trusting, expecting, praising, and submitting; it is a beautiful Psalm! Hope out of the depths. Though deep calleth unto deep around him, yet they are not hindrances to his hope in God, nor prevent him from encouraging his own soul in the words of our text, "Hope thou in God." It is a divine hope, that doth not fail us when all around us is dark. As the Spirit teaches, in Lam. iii. 26, it is good to be exercised in hope, and we cannot, if we have no

trial of hope: "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord;" it is hard to do that! not only wait, but wait *quietly*. Oh! what trust there must be in the heart that can *wait*, and *quietly* wait, for the salvation of which we experience and realize nothing, walking in darkness, and yet quietly waiting without a murmur. There is nothing more useful for our spiritual education, or more glorifying to God than this quiet waiting in hope, enabling the soul to say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Then look at Psa. xl. i.: "I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry, and brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay"—what a place to wait quietly in—"and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God"—a song of praise to God, not a note of which would have been learnt but for the depths.

Now let us distinguish between hope and hope. We read in the Bible of the *worldling's* hope: that is a hope in trifles, in shadows, in lies, in that which is sure to disappoint; and we read of three portions: the *Lord's* portion, His *people's* portion, the *world's* portion.

1. The Lord's portion is *His people*. (Deut. xxxii. 9.)
2. His people's portion is *the Lord*. (Lam. iii. 24.)
3. The worldling's portion is *the world*. (Psa. xvii. 14.)

The world fills them with the passing pleasures of time; and they have their portion in this life, but it is

a disappointing, a fleeting portion. Now contrast with it the believer's portion. What a rich portion he has ! " *The Lord* is the portion of my soul" (Lam. iii. 24) ; " A hope laid up for him in heaven" (Col. i. 5) ; and while it is laid up, the joy, the anticipation of it, is his comfort here, and his light in the darkness that is round him.

What are the *uses* of hope ? We find hope in the Bible illustrated, not by that which delivers us from difficulty and danger, but by that which protects us in difficulty and danger. (1 Thess. v. 8.) A *helmet*—the Christian's hope is compared to a helmet : " And for an helmet the hope of salvation." What is the use of a helmet ? To save us from wounds when assaulted. The soldier does not put it on to sit at home in ; it is for battle-fields ; and it is amid swords and bullets that proof of the helmet's worth can be demonstrated. So the Christian's hope is a helmet to his soul amid the assaults of the world, the flesh, and the devil, to save him from being wounded to death or despair.

Again, in Heb. vi. 19, we have hope compared to an *anchor* : " Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." What is an anchor for ? For the storm and the flood. The ship in the storm cannot do without it ; and may as well hope to reach in safety its desired haven without the sea as the child of God to reach the better shore without those storms and deep waters for which God has provided " the anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."

That anchor does not still the storm or calm the billows, but it keeps the soul firm to the Rock of Ages, be the storm never so wild and the waves never so high.

Again, hope is compared to a *refuge*. In Joel iii. 16, we find there, in a day of tremendous judgment, "the Lord will be the hope"—or place of refuge, or harbour—"for His people." And in Hosea ii. 15: "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her; and I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of *hope*." That great trouble made them prize their camp. Thus when nothing goes well with us, then we try to look out for something better before us, and God gives us the valley of Achor for a door of hope.

Now notice the proper *seasons* for hope—Luke xxi. 25-28.—Can you imagine any position more awful? And then see: "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads"—there is hope—"for your redemption draweth nigh." Observe, the time when men's hearts are beginning to fail for fear is the time for divine hope to begin to be of use. Here is a time of danger, suffering, need, fear, difficulty; you see other men's hearts quaking, their knees trembling, all their dreams disappointed; *then* "lift up *your* heads; for your redemption draweth nigh," your time is beginning. What a blessed hope is the Christian's! There are two things that make men hang down their heads: *fear*, for we have sinned; and *shame*, because we have been detected. But neither of these will be allowed to interfere with the believer's hope in that day. Hope is not given us for nothing:

the whole world is influenced by hope ; the merchant is influenced by hope when he enters into speculations ; the soldier is influenced by hope when he goes forth to the battle-field ; the sailor is influenced by hope when he braves the storms. And, ah ! see the poor pilgrim toiling home, what braces and nerves his frame for the journey ? the hope of reaching home. And is the Christian's journey nothing ? He that hath this hope in God is nerved for the journey home ; " he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." The chief enemy of hope is sin. Tribulation will not drown it, for it will live in deep waters ; temptation cannot destroy it, storms cannot cloud it, conflict cannot overthrow it ; but sin can darken hope. You cannot live in sin, and hope in God.

Let us test our hope. It has its *birth*—" Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Our hope is begotten in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ; there it takes its stand by faith, and looks out to the glory. It is a patient, living, trusting, and submissive hope, and " a hope that maketh not ashamed ;" it can afford to wait God's time and way. Why ? Because " the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us," and love patiently submits to trust Him in love and hope. And then by-and-bye we shall have the fruition, when " He shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him."

Now take one word away with you—Psa. cxlvi. 5. 10.

FORGIVENESS.

PSALM CXXX. 4.—“But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared.”

Our subject is Forgiveness. A rich word it is, and a needed blessing for us.

What is forgiveness? God's sovereign act of oblivion, whereby He blots out absolutely and puts away for ever, as far as the east is from the west, all the iniquity, transgression, and sin of every poor sinner who believes His royal proclamation in Christ Jesus. “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” That is forgiveness. God's forgiveness means that He so pardons as not only to remember no more the guilt of His people, but His forgiveness is an act of grace, whereby He receives His people thus forgiven into His highest favour, and deals with them henceforth not as criminals to be judged, but as diseased ones to be tended and healed, as ignorant ones to be trained and kept in His truth, and holiness, and love.

Forgiveness is the greatest and costliest of all the

acts of God towards us. Well might the Apostle say, "He that spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

Our text is beautiful: "There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared."

See the Spirit of God instructs us here, just as we read in St. Luke vii. 36-50, that it is the sense of God's forgiving love that begets that reverential holy fear of God in the heart of the sinner, which is the beginning of wisdom. It is not fear, and therefore forgiveness, but forgiveness, and *therefore* fear. There are two sorts of fear. The fear which proceeds from a sense of guilt and its consequences, a fear which bringeth torment, the consciousness of being guilty and condemned, and waiting for execution. Oh, the misery, the darkness, the torment of such fear! Now, the forgiveness of God puts away that fear from the heart, and produces a holy reverence, an amazing love, a great adoration for Him who, at such a cost as the sacrifice of His only begotten Son, has put away from us our guilt and all the consequences attaching to it. If we would form a due estimate of what forgiveness is, we should try to apprehend the need that exists for that forgiveness. Simon (St. Luke vii. 36-50) thought he was a sinner, no doubt; but he had never realized what sin was, and there was a great deficiency in the exhibition of his gratitude; there was no real love in it. It was different with the woman, she had got a true sense of her need, and therefore deep gratitude to Him who forgave her.

We are told that God's forgiveness is of *all* the

iniquity, transgression, and sin of our soul. We have a beautiful illustration of forgiveness in Lev. xvi., where Aaron, having presented the blood of the goat before the mercy-seat, comes out afterwards ; and we read, in verse 21 : " He lays both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confesses over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and sends him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness." There is a picture of forgiveness, a complete transfer of all the iniquities, transgressions, and sins to a substitute on the ground of atonement made by the blood that had gone in to the mercy-seat.

We read that the forgiveness of God puts away from the soul the whole body of sin. God's forgiveness is not a *part* matter. When He forgives He deals with everything that needs forgiveness in us. *Iniquity* is the root, the nature, the tendency to evil in us.

Transgression is going over the line of duty—wandering.

Sin is missing the mark altogether.

Iniquity is sin in the germ.

Transgression is sin in the act.

Sin is sin in all its phases.

It is an exceedingly interesting study to mark the nature of forgiveness as set before us in the word of God. In the New Testament we have the word forgiveness often, and wherever the word occurs it is derived from either *graciousness*, *propitiation*, or the *act of loosing*. When God Almighty forgives, it is an act of pure grace on His part. When God forgives, it

is on the ground of propitiation ; and when He forgives it is a complete loosing of the poor sinner from all the obligation and penalty due to him for his sin. You often hear people say, " I forgive, but I cannot forget." Now God not only forgives, but He *forgets* : " He remembers their sins no more."

In the Old Testament seven words are used for forgiveness, and it requires all of them to set forth adequately the fulness of that pardon which God bestows, for Christ's sake, on poor sinners.

In Psa. xxxii. 1, 2, we have three expressions for forgiveness : " Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." What a wonderful view of forgiveness !

1. The transgression *forgiven*. In the Hebrew the word means literally to *lift it away*, to carry it away. The same word is beautifully expressed in 1 Peter ii. 24 : " Who His own self *bare* our sins in His own body on the tree ;" bare them up to the tree and expiated them there, and they are gone.

2. " Sin *covered*." The allusion here is probably to the mercy-seat ; it was the covering of the ark, and underneath that lid was the law which man had broken ; there, hidden in the ark, the mercy-seat covering it, was the broken law, hidden from the presence of God, who dwelt between the cherubim on the *mercy-seat*. The Saviour, the propitiation for our sin, between the view of God and the law that we had broken.

Some also think it had allusion to the skins with which Adam and Eve were covered after they had

sinned, picturing in Old Testament shadows the glorious propitiation.

3. "*Not imputed.*" See the corrupt nature not reckoned to us, therefore forgiven; the transgression removed, put away, therefore forgiven; the sin covered up out of God's sight, therefore forgiven. "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him;" and God was in Christ, "reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

4. In Psa. li. 9, we have another word, "*blot out.*" The same word is constantly translated forgiveness in the Old Testament, a complete obliteration, or blotting out, alluding to the tables of sand that were used in those days, on which they wrote, and then removed it all away, blotted it out. Thus the Lord deals with "the record that was against us, and was contrary to us, nailing it to His cross;" alluding to the fact that a bond was cancelled when a hole was put through it. So of the bond that we had forfeited, the Lord cancelled the debt by the nails wherewith He was nailed to the cross. Also the blotting out is spoken of as "blotted out as a cloud"—a black cloud it was, but never to be found more; this is God's forgiveness.

5. Also, in 2 Sam. xii. 13, we have another word: "The Lord also hath *put away* thy sin;" and if we want to know how far, we read in Psa. ciii. 12: "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us."

6. We have another word in Zech. iii. 9: "I will *remove* the iniquity of that land in one day;" it means in the day of the cross, there is a removal. You

cannot tell the distance the east is from the west ; and yet, "as far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Do you believe it? Oh! it is sad to hear and read of such things, and not enjoy them. "As far as the east is from the west"—an infinite distance ; no mind but God's can grasp what it is! Think of the liberty, the joy, the triumph of the soul that simply takes God's promises and believes God's fact of forgiveness like that.

7. In Jeremiah xxxi. 34, we have another word: "I will *remember their sin no more.*" That is just the one act of oblivion that God is capable of.

God's forgiveness, let us understand that ; and in realizing it, we shall love Him, trust Him, and roll all our cares upon Him, and go on our way as forgiven ones. He *takes away* our sins, *covers them, remembers them no more*, does not *impute* them to us, *blots them out, puts them away, removes* as far as the east is from the west all our iniquity, not only all our sin, but our tendency to sin. Our sinful nature is atoned for, and henceforth is only regarded by God as a disease to be treated by a physician, to be tended by a Father who knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust.

In 1 Cor. vi. 9-11, the Apostle preaches this to the Corinthians. Such a list of sins, but what a sweet act of forgiveness! the iniquity removed and forgotten, and not one single act imputed to those who were guilty of all these things ; that is the forgiveness of God! Shame upon any of us who go along with our heads hanging down, while God proclaims this great forgiveness.

In Ephesians i. 7, we read: "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." Sin in the past, in the present, and in the future is all dealt with in Christ. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins." He who shed His precious blood on Calvary, grasped the whole matter, body, soul, and spirit, and secures forgiveness to all who confess His name and believe in His precious blood. (Col. ii. 10-12.) "Ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;" first cutting off and putting them away by the circumcision of Christ, and then "buried with Him in baptism," baptized into Christ by the Holy Ghost, united to Christ by faith, "and you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses," not a stain left behind, not a charge: "Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Who can condemn him? Who can doubt God's act of forgiveness? The devil cannot; the world cannot; it is only *unbelief* that doth. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us." Put off, gone completely it is, the whole thing put away, and you "stand complete in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power."

And if this be forgiveness, think of the train that follows when forgiveness has taken place:—

Adoption into God's family.

Inheritance among God's children.

Made the *righteousness of God in Christ*.

The *Father's discipline*, till you come home.

The *liberty of children*. Joyous service, unfettered towards Him.

Victory secured; more than conquerors through Christ.

Rest in faith now, and rest in fruition by-and-bye.

Praise now: "Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion."

Many say they are forgiven, but sin is no trouble to them. Many say they "are accepted in the Beloved," but it is no joy to them. May God show us what sin is, that it may be the hated thing; and show us what forgiveness is, that it may be the joyous thing. And may we, as it were, now go away from sitting at the feet of Jesus, hearing Him say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee"—we cannot serve Him till He says that—"go in *peace*;" we cannot have peace till we believe in sin forgiven.

LOVE.

1 JOHN IV. 16.—“God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”

What a study for angels and archangels is a sentence like this! And a delightful study it ought to be for us. It is height and depth and length and breadth, and it passeth knowledge. “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” Is this true of you? Is it true of me?

Our subject is *love*. We all know what love is in the abstract, a natural passion inclining us to delight in an object. You remember, in Gen. xxix. 20, we are told of Jacob that “he served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed unto him but a few days for the love he had to her.” That is what natural love is.

Here we are told that “God is love.” This is not merely to tell us that God loves. If He is love, He cannot help loving; but we are told that “God *is love*,” and the definition is worthy of our most careful attention.

If, with the Bible in your hand, you ask what love is; the answer is, *God*. If you ask what God is; the answer is, *love* is God. Love is not an attribute of God; it is the essential nature of God. What we call the attributes of God are but love in action, or

love in manifestation : boundless, bottomless, infinite, unchangeable love ; suggesting, controlling, influencing, and affecting all God's attributes in all their operations, whether in creation, providence, or grace.

Omnipotence is an attribute of God, but is always exercised in love. His fulness in grace and His fulness in glory are only the outflow of His love. Every purpose of God has been purposed in love. Every dispensation of God has its reason in love. Every testimony of God is a testimony of love. Every judgment of God is exercised in love. We read, in Psa. cxxxvi., that the overthrow of Pharoah was as much an act of love as the deliverance of the children of Israel. It is too deep to explain, but not too deep to believe. Every performance of God's promises is in love. All the executions of His judgments are dictated by love, influenced, overruled, subordinated in love, for "God is love." Love elected Christ to be the Head of creation before the world was created. He "was set up from everlasting," as if God would see the carrying out of all His blessed purposes in Christ, His own Son. Before creation existed, "when He appointed the foundations of the earth, then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him ; rejoicing in the habitable part of the earth ; and My delights were with the sons of men." (Prov. viii. 29-31.) God created the world after He had set up Christ. Then He created man in His own image ; and when man fell, redemption was not an afterthought, He had determined it all before ; but now it is made manifest. He sent His Son ; He gave a

Saviour in love ; and when He was rejected, He sent the Holy Ghost down to re-create our hearts, all out of the same love that made Him give His own Son.

If we have difficulties with regard to God's dealings with us, those difficulties arise from our ignorance. We are not fit to scan God's purposes ; it is enough for us to see that infinite love arranges all, infinite love sends our sorrows, our discipline, our disappointments : and it also sends our joys and comforts, for He is not always trying His poor child ; there's many a cup of sweet blessing mixed with the cup of sorrow. If anyone doubts His love, he may trace it to his own ignorance. He patiently has borne with us, and yet how little we trust Him as we ought. This is the reason He has to repeat His trials. We are emptied and tried ; but, after a little, self comes in, and there is no room for Him if He did not empty us again.

Look at the picture of love St. Paul gives us in 1 Cor. xiii. ; having told us first what love is not, he then tells us what love *is* : "Love suffereth long and is kind ; love envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own,"—the last thing love thinks of is self. Self-love is no love. Love "is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth,"—is always true and genuine, regards the real blessing and happiness of its object, though sometimes using strange ways to bring it about. "Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Oh ! God is love, and love never faileth ; when all things fail, love never fails.

You perceive, in this passage (1 John iv.), the Apostle John seems to get more into the love of His Lord than any of the Apostles; and it would be strange that it should be otherwise. He who laid his head on his Saviour's bosom seemed to get down into the depths of His love, and invites us to come and dwell there. Oh, what a home! come to it; "he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." It is a home, not only for John, but for you and me. Oh! what an unspeakable position of privilege and glory! God dwelling in me, and I dwelling in God; love the atmosphere and the principle in which God dwells in me and I dwell in God. Have you this love? You may have all knowledge, and understand all mysteries; but, if you have not love, you become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

If God fall in love with His creatures, think what a heart He must have for them. If the fulness of love *will* love, what must be laid up for them whom He loves? "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

Our love is spoken of here as well as God's love. The love of God in man is a great reality: "We love Him, because He first loved us." If there is any reality in the faith of any of us, love to God must exist in our hearts. And love to God "is shed abroad in our hearts by the *Holy Ghost*, which is given to us." "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit." (Verse 13.) It is only in communion with the Spirit of

love that we love. *Life* is communion with Christ, and *love* is communion with the Holy Ghost. This love is wrought in the soul by the Holy Ghost inclining and enabling a man to delight in God. If I love God, I delight in God. But if I love not God, I do not delight in God. If I delight in God, I delight in the people of God. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar" (verse 20); and if we love the people of God, we must earnestly desire to enjoy and serve God.

Love is too large a subject for a lecture. This chapter is full of hints on love. And I would now endeavour to point out a few of those hints, that you may study the subject for yourself.

Let us trace love to its *source* (verse 7): "Love is of God." Whether it is the love that flows down from God, or the love that goes back from us to God, it is *of God*; the love of God flowing down upon us, and the love to God going back from us. "We love Him, because He first loved us." If love flows down to us, God delights in us; for love delights in its object. What a sweet thought! My love to God causes me to delight in God. Do you? Do I? Oh! put the question to your hearts in His presence.

Love is of God in the same sense as light is from the sun, or dew from the ocean. All true love—whether it be of compassion or estimation or benevolence—all true love is from God.

In verse 9, we have the *manifestation* of love: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us;" and not only manifested toward us, but *in us* too. If it is not in you, you have no enjoyment of it; it is mani-

festated toward you that it may be manifested in you : "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world." The unspeakable love of God !—has it got into your hearts ?—has it laid hold on your affections, your thoughts, your life ? Christ is the incarnation of the love that God is. His words were words of love. His works are works of love. His tears were tears of love. His sighs were sighs of love. His groans were groans of love. His sufferings were sufferings of love. Every invitation from His blessed life was an invitation of love : "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

We have seen the *source* of love, and the *manifestation* of love. Now, in the end of verse 9, we see God's *design* in love : "that we might live through Him." What a life He gives ! In the first chapter of this Epistle, the Apostle speaks of it as "that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us." God manifested and bestowed His own Son that we might henceforth live through Him ; and the life He has given to us in Christ is the life of Him who has conquered death, and gone up on high, and is enthroned above the riches of the universe. Oh ! what love to give us such life.

In verses 10-14, we have the *character of this love*. (Verse 10.) "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." Not when we were sinless, but when we were *sinful* our need brought Christ down, and the love of God bestowed Him on us to rescue and to save us. "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one

another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." The love in us is the unseen, indwelling God. Oh! Spirit of God, show us these things; they are so precious. Alas! alas! that there should be such an absence of this love. If we thought more of Christ and showed more sympathy and care for others, there would be less of that carping, fault-finding spirit so sadly general among professing Christians.

In verse 13, we have the *testimony* of love to the soul: "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit." It is a fruit of the Spirit of God when a man loves, and we know that He dwells in us, because we have this witness of His Spirit. This testimony is love. If there is love in the heart, it will soon tell of Him whose love is there; it cannot hide Him. The reason that so many do not manifest Jesus in their life is because He is not there to be manifested: "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit." Do *you* know this? It is either so, or it is not so. Do you know it? and know it on this account, because He has given you His Spirit? You may have an orthodox creed in your head, but that will not affect your life. It is a sad delusion.

"Herein is *love with us* made perfect;" it is still God's love flowing down to us, and then our love going back again to God. See how love is made perfect. See the fruit of this perfection of love, "that we may have *boldness* in the day of judgment: because

as He is, so are we in this world." As Jesus is, so are we in this world. "Herein is our love made perfect." Not as He *was*, but "as *He is*." Oh! what a gift for faith to live on, what joy for love to rest in. As Christ is, so are we now; that is love. As Christ is on the throne above death, so are we. Do you believe it? It is not a future blessing, but a present enjoyment; love bestowed it. Such love must be a separating principle; we shall be fascinated with a love like this, if only we know and believe it, that "as He is, so are we in this world." Oh! what can the passing things of time do to hurt Him. They can do about as much to hurt me. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment: he that feareth is not made perfect in love;" even the love that casts out all fear and torment. Oh! that the Lord would perfect it, in you all, and me too. You say, I see it clearly and believe it fully; but you cannot *live* it, if you are in the world: "She who liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." God will not share His love, or have it shared with things that perish with the using.

There is no fear in love: "We love Him, because He first loved us." There is *confidence* in love; for, we know that we have His heart, *that* is the confidence. God makes no mistake; and, if we are sure that we have God's heart, that gives us a delightful confidence.

And then the *result* is "we love Him." This is but an outline. Will you act upon it? His command is, "Come and dwell in that love, be rooted and grounded in it," "comprehending with all saints

what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." It is a love that provides life for the dead, pardon for the guilty, justification for the lost, reconciliation for the alienated, adoption for the strangers, "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." "Unto Him that loved us"—it is His name, known in heaven and hell—"and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and His Father." (Rev. i. 5, 6.)

What reception have you given it? Is it your abiding place? Are you resting there, satisfied in it, or are you questioning, doubting, neglecting it? Is it an unrequited love, rejected, slighted, despised? It is an awful thing to hear of it.

May God give us grace to come and dwell in it.

THE GREATNESS OF THE POWER OF GOD.

EPH. I. 18-23.—“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.”

We cannot wonder at the Apostle's prayer as an introduction to such a declaration of the Almighty God in His love and grace to us poor sinners. We need to have the eyes of our understanding enlightened in order to grasp the truths that are here set before us, for they are utterly beyond what eye hath seen or ear heard, or hath ever entered into the heart of man to conceive. It bears its own divine stamp upon it. Only the mind of God could conceive what is set forth here, and it is only as we have the mind of Christ that we can in any measure take in these truths. Oh! how dimly we see at the best.

This passage furnishes a wondrously precious feast for our souls, if only we have the spiritual appetite to enjoy it.

128 *The Greatness of the Power of God.*

Observe there are three facts here stated in reference to the *exceeding greatness of the Almighty power of God*. It is spoken of here—

1. As *displayed in the Lord Jesus Christ*. Where else would there be room enough to display it?

2. As *revealed to us in God's word* for the obedience of our faith. What other word could reveal such great truth, so wonderful and gracious?

3. As *operating in every believing child of God*. There is a wonderful study for us under those three heads.

1. The exceeding greatness of the Almighty power of God as displayed in Christ. We read elsewhere of the display of that power in Christ as *Creator*: "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." For instance, we have, in Col. i. 16, a description of Christ as Creator: "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth." And again, in the opening of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the Spirit of God tells us that "God hath in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person, and *upholding* all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." So that, as *Creator*, the exceeding greatness of the Almighty power of God has been displayed in Christ. Also, as *upholder* it has been displayed. But the grandest display is connected with His Person. The Apostle speaks of this

as the "*mystery of godliness.*" (1 Tim. iii. 16.) So it is, for God Himself is the mystery of love and grace; and here we have the mystery of godliness in Christ; He was indeed the mystery! "He was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit"—He justified every purpose of His coming, every promise of His love, every thought of His heart—"seen of angels"—the immensity of God *comprehended* in the person of Christ, that there might be a *visible object* for angels to look on—"preached unto the Gentiles"—this too was a mystery; He was preached to those who for so long had worshipped stocks and stones, while His own people to whom He came cried, "Away with such a fellow from the earth,"—"believed on in the world,"—while His people are being gathered out of it, "they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world;" and by-and-bye the grand consummation—"received up into glory," members and Head together—that angels and devils may know that "as the Father hath loved Him, so hath He loved them."

Here we have Him as *Head* of His church. The mighty power of God is manifested in Him as mystical Head of His mystical body. He takes the place of His church. He dies, that she may live. He rises from the dead, that her eternal glory may be secured. He passes through death and the grave, conqueror for her, and, as her Head, ascends to the heaven of heavens, far above "all principality and power and might and dominion." This is done by Christ as Head of His church. God has taken one of ourselves, and exalted Him to the highest position in the universe; and all power in heaven, in earth, and in

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hell is evermore beneath His feet. All must obey Him, and everyone who does not bow down before His love now must be trodden down under His power by-and-bye. Christ is the wisdom and the power of God.

2. Again, see the exceeding greatness of the Almighty power of God as revealed to us here in His word for our faith, our comfort, our possession, our enjoyment. You remember, in Rom. i. 16, where the Apostle connects the power of God as displayed in Christ with the Gospel that proclaims Him: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the *power of God* unto salvation to everyone that believeth." He could not say more of Christ Himself. What is Christ more than the power of God unto salvation? and the Gospel of God is the revelation of that power for working out His mighty will in the souls and bodies of them that believe. In Eph. iii. 4-6, we have a wonderful passage where the Apostle describes the word of God. I will read it as it is given in the Revised Version, which throws light upon it: "Whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ, which, in other generations, was not made known unto the sons of men as it hath now been revealed unto His holy Apostles and prophets in the Spirit, to wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel;" this is what the Gospel reveals and produces in the soul that believes. That soul becomes a *fellow-heir*—"heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ,"—becomes a *fellow-*

member of that mystical, glorious body of which Christ is the Head. A *fellow-partaker* of the promise in Christ Jesus, and that is of "*all things*," through the Gospel.

We have, in 1 Cor. xii. 12, another passage where that fellow-membership is beautifully set forth, illustrating that "as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is Christ;" so that *Christ and His people* are the *reality*, the *substance*, which each body is but a shadow of for an illustration.

The Gospel is the instrument in the hands of the Holy Ghost whereby we are united to and become one with Him in whom all fulness dwelleth; and as that Gospel is revealed to us in His word, so the Holy Ghost is the agent by whom our souls are quickened. "He loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water *by the word*." Moreover, by His word we are fed; for we read, "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." His truth is not only our shield and buckler, but our food; not only our protector, but our sustainer: "and we are renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us." So this mighty power of God, as displayed in Christ, is revealed and communicated to us in the Gospel of the grace of God.

3. This power, so displayed in Christ and so revealed to us in His word, is exerted in every living member of that mystical body of which Christ is the Head. And this power is not a *theory*, it is a *reality*;

something to *enjoy*; a *possessed blessing*; first in the head (Eph. i. 20), and so also it operates in the body (verse 19). Think of it, if any of us by the grace of God really believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and have taken Him as God's precious Gift, and *received* Christ, then the same mighty power which works in Him is in you. You need not fear death or hell; all are beneath your feet, and you are already "more than conquerors through Him that loved you." And not only is it true of the whole body, but of each member in that body; it is "to *us-ward* who believe."

Also, look at another passage in reference to this wonderful truth, remembering that the *power working in us who believe in Christ* is our subject: "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, *according to the power that worketh in us.*" (Eph. iii. 20.)

And again: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel *according to the power of God.*" (2 Tim. i. 7, 8.) Put away all fear but the fear of His holy name; put away the fear that hath torment, that you may enjoy the fear of holy reverence, according to the power working in us.

Again, in Col. i. 27: "*Christ in you*"—not only *for* you, but "*in you* the hope of glory." Oh! take heed how you despise Him, trifle with Him—"whom we preach, *warning* every man." What shall we do, if we neglect so great salvation?—"and teaching

every man in all wisdom ; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus : whereunto I also labour, striving according to His working, which *worketh in me mightily.*"

Again, in Phil. iii. 20,—and God grant that we may all be thus described : "For our conversation is in heaven"—and well it may be—"from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things to Himself." See how His power, now working in us, never ceases to operate till He changes our vile bodies and presents us to Himself a glorious body. All this power is in the Head, and faith draws from His fulness grace for grace. (Eph. iv. 15, 16.) The fulness flowing down to every member of the body ; *all* the members receiving from the Head, the smallest as well as the most honourable. And (glorious truth) "those members of the body which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness ;" and, as it is thus with our poor natural body, so is it with Jehovah's spiritual body.

In Col. ii. 16-23, the Apostle warns us about overlooking this great truth. If the Lord God Almighty has put forth His power in Christ, that our fulness might be there, and if He has revealed Him to us, that we may receive Him by faith, then we have the power operating in us, and our souls are quickened—"because I live ye shall live also"—and we are redeemed by His precious blood. We are thus delivered, and

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converted, that we may look forward as citizens of a better country ; and He will present us at last "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." The least faith that lays hold on this truth *has Christ*. There is nothing said about degrees of this faith. Like the little seed, the acorn, which contains a forest, so the divine seed of truth in the heart contains the fulness of grace in Christ, and it will grow and bring forth fruit here and hereafter.

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RIGHTEOUSNESS.

ROM. X. 3, 4.—“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

Our subject is Righteousness. We have none of our own. If there is one thing more clearly testified in Scripture than another, it is that in ourselves we are unrighteous, and, whatsoever we may think of ourselves, our righteousness is but “filthy rags.” Alas! alas! that so many hold to their filthy rags, and leave so little room for the beautiful garment provided for their righteousness.

In the words of my text the Spirit is finding fault with the people of God, the Jewish nation, who, “being ignorant of God’s righteousness, are going about to establish their own righteousness.” And is it not so with ourselves, with professing Christians, with the world at large? There are not many who *profess* not to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but only one here and there really *receives* the Lord Jesus Christ, after all. The curse of our profession is not being satisfied with the Lord Jesus Christ; we are too apt to be looking for something in ourselves to qualify us for grace, and we are pleased to find, as we think, how much better we are than others; therefore, we hope Jesus will be our wisdom, and righteousness, and

sanctification, and redemption. That is the religion of the world ; and, if it is not still the religion of ourselves, "not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name, give glory," who hast shown us that we are corrupt, and that a corrupt stream cannot bring forth pure water, a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit.

Righteousness is the key-note both of the New Testament and of the Old. We find it set before us in three points of view in the New Testament. There never was and never can be but one righteousness ; just as there never was and never can be but one God. Oh ! if we were quite clear on this point, it would scatter many difficulties and doubts, and clear the way for much joy and peace in believing.

1. The first connection in which we shall consider this righteousness in the word of God is in reference to the *perfection of the divine nature*. The righteousness of God is infinite righteousness, for righteousness means perfection, rightness ; it is true, just, pure, holy, infinite, separate from everything that is false, and defiling, and wrong. That is righteousness, and anything short of that is not righteousness. If we but saw this, we should at once give up all self-righteousness. When a man seeks after self-righteousness, he does not grasp what righteousness is. Everything short of infinite holiness, truth, purity, and love is not righteousness ; so we need not pause to prove to you that we are not righteous. Yet, see how one sets himself over another.

2. Another sense in which righteousness is set before us in the word of God is the active and passive

obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Righteous One. The Lord Jesus is the righteousness of God. He is the *manifested* righteousness of God; the *performed* righteousness of God. He is not only perfectly righteous, just, holy, pure, and true, but in His own glorious person He is the undoing of the unrighteousness, the impurity, the untruth of poor sinners.

3. The third aspect of this righteousness in the word of God is the righteousness of God in Christ "unto all and upon all them that believe." The moment I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ I am made the righteousness of God in Him, I receive the gift of righteousness, I become possessed of the righteousness of God. Christ took upon Himself our human nature in order to be our "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." There is no righteousness under heaven but the righteousness of God: that is *the* truth of the Bible, and to bring it out is the reason of God's dealings with mankind. There is no righteousness *inherent* in man. The righteousness of God is in the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man, for the enjoyment, the possession, the reception of unrighteous sinners; and the sinner that receives the Lord Jesus Christ possesses in Him the righteousness of God, and finds Christ to be unto him the righteousness of God. It is on the ground of this righteousness that we are *pardoned*, that we are *justified*, that we are *adopted into the family of God*, are made "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ," and have the hope of glory before us.

These things are clearly laid down in the word of God. Let us look at it.

1. No man has any righteousness of his own, as we see in Rom. iii. That chapter is a treatise on justification, demonstrating our need, and revealing and attesting the righteousness of God. In verse 19, after the picture given us in the preceding verses, that "there is none righteous, no, not one," the apostle goes on to say: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." So far from any of us being righteous before God, we are all guilty before God. But it requires the Holy Ghost to convince us of this; and when He convinces us, then we give up all thoughts of self-righteousness.

2. If we are guilty, we are condemned and are under the curse; all the judgments of a broken law are hanging over our heads. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." God gave the law to manifest the guilty state of our character; and when the law tells a man he must love the Lord with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself, and he does not do it, how can that man be justified by the law that condemns him? Therefore, "the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe." Everyone may have it, and everyone who believes has it; for it "is unto all and upon all them that believe."

3. In Rom. i. 16, we are told how this righteousness is made known. The Apostle says: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power

of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth ; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith : as it is written, The just shall live by faith." There we see what the glory of the Gospel is ; it is good news to the guilty, to lost ones, to those whom the law has condemned ; and the good news is that there is righteousness for them, and *that*, not a *self*-righteousness, or a human righteousness, or an angelic righteousness ; no, but the righteousness of God. Oh, what an unspeakable righteousness ! we only need to see it, and we shall desire no other. The Gospel reveals the righteousness of God,—a righteousness which is God's own,—a righteousness of which God is the *Author*, the *Source*, and the *Revealer*. Its *character* is divine, the righteousness of God. Its *nature* is divine, the righteousness of God. The *merit of it* is eternal, the righteousness of God. The influence of it is the putting away of all sin, and entitling us to everlasting life in heaven.

If God only forgave our sin, that would not entitle us to heaven ; it is the righteousness of God in Christ that qualifies us as heirs of God. Now, by faith we are united to Christ : if we have received Christ, we have got possession of Christ, and are entitled to whatever Christ has, and He will grant to us to sit with Him on His throne. Pardon does not justify a man. Justification is much more than pardon ; it is rightness, attributing to a man that he is all right.

In Dan. ix. 24, we are told that the accomplishment of righteousness was to be the mission of the

Messiah: "Seventy weeks are determined upon Thy people, and upon Thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting *righteousness*:" that is, God's righteousness brought in by Christ. And in Rom. v. see how wonderfully God arranges for us. All our unrighteousness we inherit by our union with the first Adam; we are born in unrighteousness because of our connection with Adam. Now see how the Spirit argues in verse 17: "If by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Our connection with Christ brings us the righteousness of God. "As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Have you received that gift, or does it still lie at your door unaccepted?—or are you bargaining about it? Oh! away with your own righteousness, and receive God's righteousness: "It is unto all and upon all them that believe." "If by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." The moment you receive Jesus, you have got all the credit, all the benefit of that obedience unto death by which He wrought out both righteousness and reconciliation for lost sinners. In 2 Cor. v. 21, the Apostle beautifully puts it: "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." I re-

member a splendid sentence written by one: "O my God, I want no knowledge but the knowledge that I have sinned, and that my God hath suffered, that God hath become the sin of man, that man might become the righteousness of God." Therefore we need not fear, Jesus has put away sin that we who believe and receive Him might become the righteousness of God in Him. And we may anticipate crowns, dignities, kingdoms; for what crown or dignity or kingdom can be too glorious for the child of God? Jesus took my sin and represented it on the cross, and suffered all I deserved, that I might possess all the righteousness of God, and inherit all He deserves. Give up your own righteousness, see that you have clearly, fully, and sincerely accepted God's righteousness, that you value it, plead it, live it.

When a man has received the righteousness of God, it is because he has union with the Lord Jesus Christ, and he enjoys the power of the resurrection of Christ in his soul. You remember the grand promise given by the Lord, ere He left His disciples (John xvi. 8): "When the Comforter is come, He will reprove the world of sin and of *righteousness* and of judgment." And what was the ground of the conviction of righteousness? "Because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more." Jesus was sent down here to work out righteousness, the righteousness of God; and the Holy Ghost came down after Christ's ascension, to be the seal and witness of the consummated righteousness; and His presence in the heart of the believer is God's own seal that He is the righteousness of God in Christ. For if the righteousness had not been

completed, Jesus could not have remained with His Father; but "I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more." The Lord Jesus, in our nature, is seated at the right hand of God now; and the Holy Spirit has come down to dwell in the hearts of His people here. A two-fold pledge that believers are made the righteousness of God in Him. This righteousness is to be received by faith, for "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

In Phil. iii. 9, the Apostle prays that he "may be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." There is but one righteousness under heaven, and that is the righteousness of God. Christ is the embodiment, the incarnation of it, God's gift. The sinner receiving *Him* has all that righteousness; Jesus is made of God unto him righteousness. The presence of the Holy Ghost is the seal to every one that believes that that righteousness is sufficient, and the word of God asserts that at the Day of Judgment this will be acknowledged, for we read in Matt. xxv. 37, "then shall the *righteous* answer Him." And when judgment is passed and we go into that bright home, we are told of a *crown* of righteousness laid up for all them who love His appearing (2 Tim. iv. 6); also of "the sceptre of righteousness—the sceptre of Thy kingdom;" also of "the throne of righteousness."

And as the righteousness of God has its crown, its kingdom, and its sceptre, so also its *people*; "His people shall be all righteous." It has its *sun*: "Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness

arise, with healing in His wings." It is a shield and *breast-plate*; it is an armoury, and it has its *great reward*.

And this "Grace" wherein we stand, "reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

SANCTIFICATION.

PART I.

I CORINTHIANS I.

Our subject is Sanctification. Observe in this chapter the Apostle is addressing all those who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ at Corinth; not only some but *all*; and he calls them "the church of God which is at Corinth;" and he thus describes them: "they are sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called saints." And he is not only addressing those at Corinth, who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as sanctified in Christ Jesus, but "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord," both theirs and ours.

Now, on the ground of their being believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, he speaks of them as being all, without exception, sanctified in Christ Jesus; all, without exception, called with a heavenly calling into sainthood. And, therefore, he prays for them: "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." (Verse 3.)

All prayer, in the Apostle's mind, for God's people, is founded on the fact that they are God's people. Now see what a large possession he attributes to them. "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in everything ye are enriched by Him, in all

utterance and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that ye come behind in no gift." Now let us all try and take this in as addressed to ourselves. If you are really a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you come behind in no gift. You want faith to take this in.

There was the same variety of characters among the believers at Corinth as we have among ourselves. And the Apostle goes on in the after part of this Epistle, to speak sternly to many of those believers at Corinth, as being exceedingly deficient both in their faith and in their practice, and he teaches them and us that if we apprehend the things for which also we are apprehended of Christ Jesus, we are in the best position for walking worthy of our high calling in Christ Jesus. Our failure in apprehending the largeness of the grace bestowed upon us, is the reason that we live at so beggarly a rate in spiritual things. When we are hanging down our heads, and walking with trembling knees, do we really believe that "we come behind in no gift"? We make too little of the gift of Christ, of the gift of the Holy Ghost; we make too little of God's promises, and of the fact that "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, will He not"—as a matter of course—"freely give us all things?" But we do not live as those who have such vast gifts, and are for ever questioning whether they are really ours, therefore, practical unbelief lies at the root of practical inconsistency.

"So that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,"—that is something

to wait for—"who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Verses 7, 8.) Do you believe this? It is not addressed to some choice believers, but to every believer at Corinth, the weakest as well as the strongest. The feeblest believer among you is as truly in possession of the gifts of God as the strongest believer, the difference is in the apprehension of this great fact. "Lord increase our faith," for according unto our faith shall be our practical usefulness, our victory over self, the world, and the devil. God forgive us for our little faith.

"Enriched by Him....who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." Oh! what exceeding joy, liberty, rest, and peace, such an address as this is calculated to bestow upon any one who believes it. It takes us from all thought of our own failures and unworthinesses, and our hearts and hopes become centred on Christ.

"God is faithful by whom ye were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." Who? Every believer in Corinth, and every believer everywhere. Called to be a *partner* with Christ, for that is the meaning of fellowship. What a splendid arrangement for the poor sinner! and what inconceivable grace on Christ's side, to condescend to be our partner! All emptiness in us, all fulness in Him. All unworthiness in us, all worthiness in Him. And on the ground of this unspeakable privilege the Apostle exhorts, warns, and upbraids us. "Now I beseech you brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye all speak the

same thing, and that there be no divisions among you," &c. (Verse 10.)

There is a great deal of false teaching about sanctification. There is such a thing as professing to be a believer without being a believer, and believing some of God's truth and not all. We must believe the *whole of God's truth*, and so shall we be strengthened, and be "vessels unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use."

The word *sanctify* is of constant occurrence in the Bible, and it means *to set apart for God's use*. When a man is sanctified he is set apart, and that is *God's act*, and not his. Some are apt to confound the fruits of faith in us with sanctification; if they were called *fruits of faith* there would be less confusion. There is no doubt great room for improvement in all of us in bringing forth these fruits of faith. But if believers at all, we are equally sanctified in Jesus Christ: "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." I know not a more influential truth than this! But oh! the want of faith in some believers, crippling them, enervating them, and making them unfruitful. Strange that they should "come behind in no gift," and yet live such a beggarly life.

We have the word *sanctify* in reference to the Sabbath Day in Gen. ii. 3: "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." There was nothing intrinsically holy in the Sabbath Day, that is another thought altogether, but it was *set apart* by God for His own service.

In the same way the word is used with regard to

the Temple, the Tabernacle, and the vessels of the Temple and Tabernacle. Some were made of silver, some of gold, and of divers materials, and these materials were not more intrinsically holy than other materials, but their sanctification consisted in their being taken up by God, and set apart for His own specific use.

And so you remember concerning the lamb that was set apart for the Passover Feast ; it was not more holy than other lambs, but it was "*set apart.*"

So, also, with regard to the *first-born* : "I have sanctified to Myself the first-born." The first-born of Israel were not more intrinsically holy than the first-born of Egypt ; they were much on a par ; but they were set apart by God, for God's use, by an act of God's will and grace.

So with regard, also, to the *priests* ; they were not more holy than other Israelites, but they were set apart. And so, also, with prophets, kings, warriors, and judges, set apart for the purposes God Almighty intended for them. We find in the New Testament the same expression with regard to Christ Himself : "say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world." (John x. 36.) There is no allusion there to His intrinsic holiness, but the setting apart of the glorious Lord, with all His holiness, for the great purpose God intended Him for. And, also, in John xvii. 19 : "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Is it that He made Himself more holy than before ? No ; but He set Himself apart, with all His supplies of grace, and glory, and holiness, and love,

that His people might be sanctified. Also, in Heb. ii. 11: "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." Thus believers are spoken of as sanctified—"sanctified *in* Christ Jesus"—God seeing the believer in Christ, set apart with Christ, and in union with Christ, for His own possession for ever. Do you believe in that position? Herein lies the power of a practical, consecrated life: and, just in proportion as our memories, affections, and thoughts are engaged in this truth, we shall be consecrated to the service of Him with whom we have fellowship and communion through grace unspeakable.

The same in Heb. x. 10: "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." What a beautiful picture of sanctification! Separation from sin, from condemnation, from judgment, to heaven and God, to peace and glory through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all. Do you believe it?

Now as we consider what *we are* who are thus sanctified in Christ Jesus, the question of our being sanctified by the blood comes in. We read in Heb. xiii. 12: "Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." In Heb. x. 29, we read of "the blood of the covenant wherewith He was sanctified;" and Heb. ix. 13, "the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifying to the purifying of the flesh." The mere type of this sanctification had a wonderful influence

according to the Levitical law, sanctifying to the purifying of *the flesh*; and, if the blood of bulls and of goats under the Levitical economy had such a wonderful effect, shall not the blood of Christ avail for that for which it was shed under the Gospel? "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your *conscience* from dead works to serve the living God." (Heb. ix. 14.) Oh! that we might have enlightened, believing, purged, sprinkled, purified conscience, and the conduct will soon follow. See, the blood is needed to sanctify because of what we were, enemies, alienated, dead. The blood atones for the enemies, and the alienated; the blood answers for the condemned, and represents the dead. And that is only part of the great work of Christ for us. His death places us in a new condition, not only are we no longer enemies, but we are *reconciled*. Not only no longer alienated, but we have fellowship. We have not only been atoned for, but we are justified. And, "because I live, ye shall live also." Thus He sanctifies His people by the blood. The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of an outward not an inward state; of a legal state, not a change of nature. We must first believe that we are delivered from legal guilt, before there ever can be in us the power and practical energy for a life of holy walking.

The subject is too large for a lecture. *All* God's children are sanctified by God, sanctified in Christ, sanctified by the blood, sanctified through the truth, sanctified in the Spirit, and by the Holy Ghost.

"According to your faith be it unto you."

SANCTIFICATION.

PART II.

HEB. IX. 13, 14. — "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

The blood of bulls and goats effectually accomplished the cleansing and sanctifying of the flesh, according to God's arrangement, but it could not touch the conscience, and it was not intended that it should; but, if the blood of bulls and of goats sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ sanctify to the purifying of the conscience.

In Heb. x., the Apostle argues the cessation of legal services, on the ground that they could not "make the comers thereunto perfect;" and then introduces the blood of Christ, telling us distinctly that by one offering of Himself His people are perfectly sanctified.

Sanctification means setting apart to God. According to the law this setting apart was by blood and oil, shadowing the blood of Christ and the unction of the Holy Ghost. When the Lord has set apart a believing man for Himself by the blood of Jesus, his sins are put away; and, when the Lord sanctifies the man by the

gift of the Holy Ghost, power is imparted to him for the calling wherewith he is called. The sanctifying which the blood of bulls and of goats and the anointing oil could *not* do, the blood of Jesus and the unction of the Holy Ghost effectually accomplishes.

God gives His own character, God gives His own nature, to the man set apart for His service, that he may be sufficient for his calling. It is the imparted life of God that qualifies a man so set apart for the service of God.

How is this effected? By the Son of God assuming human nature. The setting apart of Christ lies at the root of His people's sanctification—"if the root be holy, so are the branches"—and He became the new root of humanity and the first fruits of the Church consecrated unto God.

How can we get an interest in and union with the humanity of Christ? All men are not united to Christ, it is a bond not of nature (1 Pet. i. 23): "The word of God," the written word of God, believed unites us to the incarnate word of God, the Son of God; and receiving Christ we become the children of God by faith in Him, "and if children then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." Get grafted by faith into the new root and you will become united to the first fruits. Also look at 2 Pet. i. 4: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." God would fail of His object in setting us apart if He did not give us a nature suitable to our calling. And it is not enough to receive His word, (1 Thess. iv. 7, 8,) "for God hath

not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness ; he therefore that despiseth (*rejecteth*), despiseth not man, but God, who hath *also given unto us His Holy Spirit.*"

We see then, that union between a man individually and Christ in human nature is by faith in Him through the word of God, and through the Spirit of God. Thus God effectuates the sanctification for which He sets apart in His love our souls and bodies. And this is the abiding condition of our daily life and conduct, and is realized by us in proportion as we live the life we live in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God. Therefore there is a vast difference in the practical walking of God's children. Some live so much nearer to Him than others. With some grace seems to grow exceedingly, but in all of us there is great room for improvement. We want to grasp the truth by faith more and more, that we may more practically live the life of Christ on earth. This is the first aim and desire of every true believer, and if it is not your first aim and desire you are no true believer. This walking with Christ is the sincere endeavour of every child of God, and if it is not yours, you are no child of God. This is God's design concerning us, and this is the calling wherewith He has called us, and "as He which hath called us is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy." But let us begin at the beginning ; look at Rom. vi. 22, and you will there see a description of the sanctified which you must not forget. "Now, being made free from sin," all God's children are made free from sin, Christ's cross has settled that matter ; if one single

sin could be charged against them, it would be impossible for them to be sanctified unto God. The first thing God does for those He calls His own is, "He puts away their sin," and in the knowledge of these things the soul becomes practically sanctified unto God, "now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life." There is no fruit unto holiness till we are taken out of nature and planted into Christ. We must be partakers of the fulness of Christ before we can bring forth fruit unto holiness.

Look again in Eph. v. 8, 9: "For ye we were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord,"—observe the order—"Now are ye *light* in the Lord, *walk* as children of light," you cannot walk as children of light, till you are light, so long as you are in darkness, you are not children of the light, but, if children of the light, then comes the duty and privilege and the enjoyed walk, "for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." First He makes you free, and then enables you to bring forth fruit as His freed ones. He brings you into light, then you walk in the light, and then you bring forth fruit unto God. (2 Tim i. 7-9.) We cannot walk in holiness, but in the power of the Holy Ghost, and God gives His child this power, this unction, this great energy, and as we realize the gift by faith we walk in the power of it.

Again in Heb. x. 10: "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Here is the root of sanctification, the offering of that body, and our identification with

that offering by faith. And that is complete for all believers. Compare that 10th verse with the 14th verse: "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." In Christ every believer is equally set apart to God. But oh! what a difference between the practical walk of believers by reason of want of faith, worldliness, inconsistency. We ought to be very careful to see that we "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God by Whom we *are sealed* unto the day of redemption."

In 2 Cor. iii. 18, the Apostle says: "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of God." May the Lord give you the unveiled face, and just in proportion as you clearly see Christ; intelligently contemplate Christ; you will become assimilated to Him. Here we have the *standard* of Christian holiness, the *progress* of Christian holiness, the *means* of Christian holiness, and the *power* of Christian holiness.

What is the standard of Christian holiness? "*The same image.*" Don't let us be led away by what one hears and reads now about holiness. Some talk of being holy according to their conscience. Is a man's conscience the standard of God's holiness? "*The same image.*" Some say "I never wound my conscience." Is that the standard? No, *His image*. Is it walking according to our light? "If the light that is in us be darkness, how great is that darkness." No, *His image* is the standard. Others say, I live up to my experience; they greatly deceive themselves, and if they did, would that be the standard? *His image*. "We

all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory;" here is a standard that does not change, it is *perfection, the image of God*, and we are called to it, and shall attain unto it. What a glorious prospect for God's redeemed ones! When shall we attain to it? "When He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is!" There are so many veils now over our eyes, if we had less of flesh, less of self in our gaze, we should see more of Him. May the Lord give us the view of Jesus with nothing between. We shall be like Him, for (Col. i. 22) "He will present us holy and unblameable and irreprovable in His sight."

There are, you see then, two parts in sanctification; one for all the children of God, they are absolutely complete in Christ Jesus, the Lord has put His children apart in Christ, "*ye are complete in Him*," and this refers to the weakest as well as the strongest believer. All are made to drink into the same Spirit. All are equally members of Christ, all are called. But the failure is in the practical carrying out of this in our own life by faith, therefore we have the constant exhortations by the Apostle, as in 2 Cor. vii. 1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

How is the *progress* of Christian holiness carried on? it is not by an occasioned glance, but "we all, with open face *beholding* as in a glass the glory of the Lord," the eyes become enlightened, we behold and apprehend, faith is engaged and enjoyed, and the

truth is lived, "and the life we live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God," in union and communion with Him. That was what our Blessed Master meant when He said, "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth ;" feeding on that truth makes the thing practical in our life and conversation.

Faith is the *means* of Christian holiness, as we read in Acts xv. 8, 9 ; and you remember also 1 Pet. i. 22. And the Holy Ghost is the *power* of Christian holiness: "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the *Spirit of God.*"

There is no holiness but by faith, and there is no real faith that does not tend to holiness. Use Him who came to be the Revealer of Christ. Look at 2 Thess. ii. 13. God sets you apart, having chosen you from the beginning, and then reveals to you by His Spirit through His Word that through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth you may apprehend those things for which you are apprehended in Christ Jesus.

Do not allow the failures or infirmities of the flesh to call in question the fact that "of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Feed on it, be diligent about it, and "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

DAILY CLEANSING.

1 JOHN 1. 7.—“But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

“Fellowship” means partnership—partnership with God ; and, if we are not conscious of this partnership with God, we are so far walking in darkness. We may make a loud sounding profession, but still we are walking in darkness if we are not in the enjoyment of partnership with God ; and we can only know this partnership by faith in God’s word. This is the light by which the glory of the Lord in the Gospel of His Son illuminates us, discovering to us our spots and stains, which are met by this splendid Gospel,—“the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

In the practical Christian experience of every child of God, as it is written for us in His word, we constantly find the expression of the deepest sense of sin and unsatisfied longing after practical holiness, associated at the same time with the most triumphant sense of victory in Christ. Look at Rom. vii. 24, 25 : “Oh ! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death. I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord.” See the association between the deep sense of guilt and the most triumphant expression of faith. So, also, in Phil. iii. 20 : “Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” See the assured expectation,

the eye of faith, the triumphant position of the man, looking for the Saviour. What is his experience? "Who shall change our vile body"—this body, the sphere of so much that is sad, so much that is humiliating to us—"who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things to Himself." See the association of thought; the most triumphant confidence in the returning Saviour, and the deepest sense of the state of the body of his humiliation.

See also 1 John iii. 2: "Beloved *now* are we the sons of God;" *now*, "while the conflict is deplored and lamented;" *now*, "while subject to fightings within and without;" *now* "are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." Oh! we are so unlike what we shall be; it is hard for faith to overlook what we are and see what we shall be; "but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is;" and just as we have this hope fixed in our hearts we shall live separate lives—"every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure." You see we have the *assurance* first and the *practice* afterwards. We must know first that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, and that knowledge must be founded on His word, ere the hope will possess you and fill your affections, aims, and life, because "every man that hath this hope, purifieth himself even as He is pure."

This yearning after a state of complete conformity to God in Christ, and which is to be satisfied and

satisfied only at His coming, is the invariable characteristic of every child of God.

Observe the first question. It must be a matter of pure faith. Have we received *Christ* into our hearts, God's gift? Some say they believe Him, but have you *received* Him? You could not believe Him to be so great and free a gift and not receive Him. And if you have received Him, what a gift, what a power, what a Saviour you have received! If you have received Christ, Christ has given you freedom from all sin. I did not say from the *presence* of all sin, that is the fearful folly people state now, and in order to keep to it, they lower the standard of sin. But if you have received Christ, He gives you freedom, and no sin can condemn you or be charged against you, because it has been charged against Him, and He has expiated it. That is the foundation stone of the peace the Spirit of God imparts to the soul that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. The curse of the law has gone from you for ever, because Christ was made the curse of the law and suffered in your place, and your sins, transgressions, and iniquities have been all put away from your soul as far as the east is from the west, on the ground of the substituted sacrifice in your stead of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the way in which "the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin."

When the word of God says that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin," it means what it says. "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." Oh! it is impossible to describe the fulness of that statement, or to over-estimate the glory of the

Gospel it proclaims. *He* was not made free. "God made Him to be sin for us:" that was "the law of life;" and because He was made sin, "I am made the righteousness of God in Him;" that is "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." We only live on God practically as we feed upon Him. We are not under the law, but under grace, we who are in Christ Jesus. The law has not a claim upon us for our justification, and if it had the slightest claim you could not be justified; for you break the law every day of your life. The law condemns us all as sinners, but the glory of the Gospel is that you are not under the law; the dominion of sin over you has passed from you forever, and henceforth your privilege is to meet all your foes, within and without, by singing the victory, "I thank God through Jesus Christ, my Lord." "The wages of sin is death," "the strength of sin is the law," but neither the wages or the strength have aught to do with me, and I may begin and continue to sing, standing in Christ, and rejoicing in the liberty wherewith He hath made me free. This is the way to conquer and to walk as a Christian; but you cannot do it so long as you are living in the practice and under the consciousness of sin. So long as sin is wounding your conscience, and shutting out God from you, you cannot walk at liberty; so this text is supplied to us, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin," plainly inferring that they have need of the cleansing blood of Jesus who are walking in the light of God's countenance, "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." See

the need of the cleansing of the blood of Jesus in reference to all the discovered sins of the man who is walking in the light, and enjoying the fellowship of God. No man is so conscious of his corruption as the man who is walking in the light; the more clearly the light shines, the more we see the necessity of the cleansing blood of Jesus.

See the connection between chapters vii. and viii. of Romans: "O wretched man that I am, who *shall* deliver me from the body of this death?" (vii. 24.) "There is therefore *now* no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (viii. 1.)—not a matter of "*shall*" there. The question of the struggling soul is answered by the "*now*" of the viii. 1. In the midst of all our conflicts between the inner man and the flesh, and notwithstanding them, there is not one condemnation and no possible separation. The Apostle does not say there are no trials, temptations, conflicts, failures, humblings, emptyings; but he says, "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," and the reason is "because" the blood of Jesus Christ "cleanseth from all sin," not in the sense of sinless perfection, but *legal purifying*. It is the blood of atonement he is speaking of, and he gives the meaning of it: "If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins;" "if we walk in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." He is speaking of the blessing of pardon, forgiveness, justification, and the consequent peace and uninterrupted communion and

fellowship with God, through the blood of Jesus Christ, notwithstanding the emptyings, failures, and humblings, while we walk with God. This is very deep experience, and no one but a child of God knows what I am talking about. The point here is like what our Lord opens out in John xiii. 4, 5; by washing the feet the Lord means the daily walk of the Christian (5, 10). We are tempted sometimes to think when we find ourselves crippled, hindered, defiled, or empty, that we have not been forgiven, that we need again to be atoned for. No, says Jesus, "he that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." We have the same thought in the vision Peter had, when he saw the sheet let down from heaven, wherein were all manner "of four-footed beasts of the earth and wild beasts," &c., and there came a voice to him, saying, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat." But Peter said, "Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." "What God hath cleansed call thou not common." "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Now see the 8th verse: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves"—we that are walking in the light—"if we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar"—when we enter the light we are sinners, and the light only discovers to us more and more how truly we are sinners. The word of God discovers to us day by day what defilement is. When Jesus puts His blood on us, He also gives us His Spirit: the anointing of the Holy Ghost comes down

on the blood, and the Spirit works there, causing us to hate evil, and follow that which is good ; while He shows us the blood that cleanseth us. And the knowledge of these things purifies the heart ; as we read in Acts xv. 8, 9 : “ God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us, and put no difference between us and them, *purifying their hearts by faith.*” This is different from purifying by the blood ; the truth of the Lord lays hold on those whom the blood has purified, cleansing and renewing them,—“sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth ” We read (1 Pet. i. 22) : “ Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.” When the Holy Ghost imparts this truth to the soul, that soul is begotten into divine life, and his thoughts, desires, and affections are changed into a heavenly direction.

“ My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.” As we receive these precious testimonies, we shall love the things of God and hate the things of self. “ If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins.” There is the blood cleansing the conscience, while the truth, that the blood doth put away sin, purifies the heart and makes us love the things of God, and hate sin.

The daily walk can never be without the need of cleansing. “ The life that I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.” The blood cleanses the conscience while we live the life we live in the flesh by faith in the Son of God. “ God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

You must be safe, and know you are safe, before you can have peace with God. You must have peace with God, and be in the enjoyment of it, before you can walk wholly with the Lord. Safety is the root of peace, and peace is the root of a holy walk. You must be cleansed as to the conscience before you can be consecrated to God as to the life.

You must have the holy calling before you can live the holy life, "as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." You must know the holy calling before you can live the holy life.

Christ is the source of your justification, and of your sanctification; Christ *for* you is justification, Christ *in* you is sanctification. You are no longer alone if Christ is in you. You are accepted in the Beloved, taught by the Spirit, sealed by the Holy Ghost, fed daily by the word of God; do not neglect it, don't starve your souls. "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." And it is only by feeding on the word of God that your soul can be strengthened. Thus realizing acceptance, enjoying partnership and fellowship with God, we shall daily discover more and more our need of this great salvation; and, while discovering our need, we shall day by day come to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, where we may always come and wash; and we shall go on from strength to strength, from joy to joy, from triumph to triumph, "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body."

THE GOSPEL.

ST. MARK XVI. 15.—“And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.”

Our subject is the Gospel. There is no more familiar word among us than this, and yet not unfrequently it is a word not clearly understood. It is a blessed word! the sweetest sound that ever came forth from heaven. It means *good news*, glad tidings of great joy without any admixture; good news from the place of good news, from *heaven*. Good news to sinners, and for sinners, that is to say, good news for the guilty, for the condemned, for the lost, for the most guilty, the most condemned, the most lost of the sons of men. And if it is good news for them, it must be exactly suited to their need. It is not a message demanding anything that cannot be done, but it is given to them, and takes them just as they are. The Gospel comes to us as guilty, lost, condemned sinners with every supply for our need, without the smallest demand on our resources, or condition to be fulfilled by us; but it proclaims pardon, life, and salvation, full, free, finished, from the God of all grace, and on the ground of all grace. There is not a man on earth so lost that the Gospel is not a good message from heaven to him. What is this message, and whom does it concern?

Observe Rom. i. 3, it is “concerning His Son

Jesus Christ our Lord." The good news from heaven is a foundation truth, not about you or me, but about *Christ*. Any truth concerning you or me must be bad news, for we are guilty, corrupt, cold, dead ; that is the only thing true of us. But the Gospel is not about us; there is a more glorious theme for the Gospel than we can supply, it is concerning His Son, good news about what He is, what He feels, what He has done, about the success of His mission, and the triumphs of His blood.

In 1 Cor. xv., we find the Apostle telling us what the Gospel is about (verses 1-9). There is the Gospel; it consists of a few facts, and they are all about Christ; a few simple facts, a few well-attested facts about Christ, and whether you believe them or whether you do not, they are equally true. When we preach the Gospel, we preach facts, God's accomplished realities concerning Jesus Christ, that He *died*, and was *buried*, and *rose again*, and that He was *seen* of above five hundred brethren at once; that is true, whether you believe it, or whether you reject it. If you believe it, it gives you joy and peace unspeakable and full of glory, but it does not make it true. If you reject it, it leaves you without joy, and hope, and God, but it does not make it untrue. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." Oh, what a free, sufficient, and glorious Gospel this is! take care you do not trammel it with conditions. The Gospel does not contain one single condition or threat. It is a simple declaration from heaven; "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is

preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things." This is the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.

Look at the *definitions* of the Gospel as they are given us in the Bible, they are very wonderful.

This Gospel is called the *Gospel of God*, God's good news: "God is love." That is news to dwell on, to rest in, to shout songs of triumph about. God is not a God of fear, of wrath, of judgment, "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Then this Gospel is called "the *Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*," and we have Jesus preaching it in Luke iv. 18. That is the Gospel of Christ, and He came down all the way from heaven to preach that Gospel.

"*Glad tidings of great joy*" the angels announced that Gospel to be. Is it not splendid? There is not a soul on earth for which there is not "glad tidings of great joy"—not a soul, however dark, corrupt, back-slidden, wandered, or sinned, for which there is not "glad tidings" from heaven.

In Eph. i. 13, it is called "the *Gospel of your salvation*." The word of truth, we need not fear to trust it. "What shall we do if we neglect so great salvation?"

In Eph. vi. 15, it is "the *preparation of the Gospel of peace*." He that has sent it to us has entered into all the little and great matters of our earthly history, and proclaims "Peace, peace, to him that is far off and to him that is near." He is "the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,

that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant."

In 1 Tim. i. 11, it is the "*Gospel of the glory of the blessed God.*" It is not only the grace of God, but the *glory* of God, to send this message to poor sinners.

Then it is called the "*everlasting Gospel.*" (Rev. xiv. 6.) Oh! that that mystic angel would bear it north, south, east, and west.

These are some of the *definitions* of it. Now, see what are the *prerogatives*.

In 1 Cor. iv. 15, we are taught that, by this proclaimed Gospel, *souls are begotten into the family of God.* This is the truth by which souls are born again.

In Rom. xvi. 25, 26, we are taught another prerogative; that it is "made known to all nations for the *obedience of faith.*" That is one of the most beautiful prerogatives; its claim upon our obedience; it is disobedience if we do not claim it, and rest in it, and enjoy it. Unbelief is disobedience, because we thereby disobey the oath, word, and testimony of the blessed God.

In Eph. iii. 5, we are said to be "*made partakers of God's promise in Christ* by the Gospel." The Gospel is the promise, and when I receive and obey it I become a partaker of the promise it contains; I become a partaker of Christ, and in Him of all the promises of God, and the Gospel becomes the rich treasury of God to me.

We read in 1 Pet. i. 12 that the Holy Ghost accompanies the Gospel; it is in the hearing of the Gospel that the Holy Ghost comes into the soul:

"them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." Therefore in Gal. i. 8 we read, "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." There is no news that suits the sinner but the Gospel from heaven; but if conditions are added to it, or if it is diluted, it is not the Gospel of God. The Gospel of God gives everything and takes nothing; we have nothing to pay. "But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost."

Note what we are taught as to the subject-matter of the Gospel; it is *concerning Christ*. Let us look at a few descriptions of it. In Eph. iii. 8, it is called the "*unsearchable riches of Christ*;" not a word about *you*, but God's riches bestowed on you for the taking. In Rom. i. 17, it is described as "*the righteousness of God*;" it is a revelation of the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God to condemn you? no, but to endow you. The Gospel gives you righteousness, *you* have none of your own, therefore, says the Apostle (verse 16), "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Why "*the power of God unto salvation*?" because it gives it; it renews the soul before the faith kindles the hope. In Col. i. 27, it is described as *Christ in you the hope of glory*. That is why the Gospel is the power of God; it is *Christ*, Christ proclaimed, Christ bestowed, Christ possessed, Christ in *you*. Another description we have in Eph. iii. 10: "*The manifold wisdom of God*." It is the exhibition of, and the outcome of, the manifold wisdom

of God. His love, His wisdom, His power, devised the blessed history that the Gospel of the Grace of God proclaims, therefore it is called in Rom. xv. 29, "the *fulness* of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ."

I want to commend this Gospel and this blessing to my own soul and yours. The command is, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," that we who believe *are fellow heirs, fellow members* of the same body—incorporated with Christ in the belief of His Gospel—"partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel." (Eph. iii. 6.)

O thanks be unto God for the love that devised, the generosity that bestowed, and the power that effected the glorious Gospel of the blessed God !



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